

Certification and Licensure: Clarifying the Confusion

It is not uncommon for professionals to confuse the processes of specialty board certification and state licensure when it comes to SUD professional credentialing. The reason is simple, it can be confusing. As we receive a lot of requests for information on both, it is important to clarify the differences.

A bit of information can provide a snapshot of the differences and purposes of each:

Certification is the verification of one's competency to provide counseling to individuals with substance use disorders, based on standards developed by national and international subject matter experts through a legally defensible and psychometrically sound process. It is not designed to allow for private practice or billing, serving the same role as board certification for physicians and nurses. Certification is solely the responsibility of the Connecticut Certification Board.

Licensure, specifically the LADC, is a function of state government with standards developed through the legislative process, making the requirements statutory. One who holds a license has permission to practice as an independent contractor (within the identified scope of practice) in Connecticut and thereby bill third parties for services. The licensure process is fully a function of the Connecticut Department of Public Health (<https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Practitioner-Licensing--Investigations/Alcohol-Drug-Counselor/Alcohol-and-Drug-Counselor-Licensure-Requirements>) and any requests for information on licensure should be directed to them for assistance.

In addition, the International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium (IC&RC) has addressed the differences as well. You can find that information on their website at <https://internationalcredentialing.org/lic-cert/>. We hope this provides some clarity on both.

The CCB, as the workforce development agency for the SUD prevention/treatment/recovery industry, considers holding both licensure and board certification the gold standard for professionals.