

THERAPEUTIC RECREATION LICENSURE UPDATE

**By Vincent Bonadies, MS, CTRS
RT Licensure Committee Co Chair**

The RT/TR Licensure Committee is pleased to announce that we now have a proposed Bill in the NYS Assembly introduced by Assemblyman Lancman. The Bill is # A08073. This all happened shortly after the NYSTRA Conference where we received lots of feedback re the proposed bill.

WOW! What a conference! Hats off to NYSTRA Conference committee for a great job they did at this year's conference. The educational sessions were plentiful and informative. Speaking of informative. I would like to share some of discussions that took place at the conference about licensure.

During the conference a lot of people were talking about the RT licensure initiative. That is exactly what we need to do. That is to start the discussion about licensure. One of the concerns involved the ever lasting debate of RT vs. TR. In the current draft of the bill the language of recreational therapy is used quite often. The Recreational Therapy Licensure Committee fully understands that recreation therapy represents a small portion of the field and the practice of therapeutic recreation includes other areas (and growing areas) beyond medical settings. We have looked at this concern closely and revise the bill to make therapeutic recreation a stronger term in the bill.

It was also wonderful to have met Jerry Jordan from Oklahoma at the conference. For those of you who don't know, Oklahoma is one of several states that are pursuing licensure. They appear to be further along in the process than us but he was more than willing to share Oklahoma's bill with us. Jerry gave us some valuable advice as we move along in getting the bill passed.

Since the conference the bill has been posted in the New York State Assembly for legislators to look at and sign on. I would like to encourage you to take a look at the bill by going to <http://assembly.state.ny.us> and enter the bill number A08073. The New York State Licensure Committee notice that there were some errors in the bill that needed to be corrected. Don't be alarmed. Assemblyman Lancman's office has assured me that the bill can be corrected. Regardless of that the bulk of the bill is correct. Not everything is perfect in the world of politics.

Most importantly, I would like to ask you to begin to talk to other people about our efforts to become licensed in New York State. Begin to talk to other recreation therapists, your co-workers, your colleagues in other allied health care professions, and your consumers about our pursuit towards licensure. **START CONTACTING YOUR LEGISLATOR AND ASK THEM TO SIGN ON AND SUPPORT THE BILL.** We need to have a large volume of requests sent to our legislators requesting that they sign on to the bill. NYSTRA, METRO and other professional organizations will be sending out emails to their members with a sample letter to send to our legislators so we can get the ball rolling. It is vital that we get the word out and contact our legislators.

In the weeks to come, we would be eager to hear your comments. Let us know which assembly members were contacted and the results. Please don't hesitate to contact Linda or myself if you need some help to get the conversation started. We will be more than delighted to help.

So as we move towards licensure I will be updating you on our progress either through emails or postings like this one on the NYSTRA and METRO websites. In the meantime, make sure you call, visit or email your assemblyman and request that he sign on and support Bill # A08073, the RT Licensure Bill.

Please contact us if you have any questions.

Excelsior!

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