Notice is hereby given in accordance with G.S. 150B-21.2 that the Board of Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors intends to amend the rules cited as 21 NCAC 53 .0204-.0206, .0308, .0601, .0602, .0604, .0701 and .0902.

Link to agency website pursuant to G.S. 150B-19.1(c): www.ncblcmhc.org

Proposed Effective Date: July 1, 2022

Public Hearing:
Date: April 7, 2022
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Location: 7 Terrace Way, Greensboro, NC 27403

Reason for Proposed Action:
21 NCAC 53 .0204 - This proposed change updates the process to allow for online submission of Professional Disclosure Statement.
21 NCAC 53 .0205 - This proposal reflects legislative update regarding reciprocity agreements and clarifies the requirements for out of state licensees.
21 NCAC 53 .0206 - This proposal reflects legislative updates regarding graduate counseling experience, clarifies the requirements for internship, practicum, and clinical mental health settings, and states the contents of Verification of Graduate Counseling Experience Form.
21 NCAC 53 .0308 - This proposal clarifies the definition of receipt of application by the Board and sets additional requirements for provision of an email address and for documents verifying the name change.
21 NCAC 53 .0601 - This proposal adds a requirement that licensees shall be notified by email or mail of licensure renewal within 45 days before the license expiration.
21 NCAC 53 .0602 - This proposal sets an additional requirement for a current email address to be provided and for additional documents to be provided verifying the name change.
21 NCAC 53 .0604 - This proposal adds the licensee’s extended family members whose major illness or death can be the basis for renewal extension; adds the requirement that the major illness be documented by a licensed healthcare provider;
21 NCAC 53 .0701 - This proposal reflects legislative update regarding the educational requirements and course work for licensed clinical mental health counselor associates;
21 NCAC 53 .0902 - This proposal adds that a notification for renewal of professional corporation or professional limited liability company can be sent by electronic mail.

Comments may be submitted to: Melonie Davis, 2C Terrace Way, Greensboro, NC 27403; phone (336) 217-6007; email NCFAQ@ncblcmhc.org

Comment period ends: May 2, 2022

Procedure for Subjecting a Proposed Rule to Legislative Review: If an objection is not resolved prior to the adoption of the rule, a person may also submit written objections to the Rules Review Commission after the adoption of the Rule. If the Rules Review Commission receives written and signed objections after the adoption of the Rule in accordance with G.S. 150B-21.3(b2) from 10 or more persons clearly requesting review by the legislature and the Rules Review Commission approves the rule, the rule will become effective as provided in G.S. 150B-21.3(b1). The Commission will receive written objections until 5:00 p.m. on the day following the day the Commission approves the rule. The Commission will receive those objections by mail, delivery service, hand delivery, or facsimile transmission. If you have any further questions concerning the submission of objections to the Commission, please call a Commission staff attorney at 984-236-1850.

Fiscal impact. Does any rule or combination of rules in this notice create an economic impact? Check all that apply.

- ☐ State funds affected
- ☐ Local funds affected
- ☑ Substantial economic impact (>= $1,000,000)
- ☐ Approved by OSBM
- ☑ No fiscal note required

SECTION .0200 - DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

21 NCAC 53 .0204  PROFESSIONAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR LCMHCAS LCMHCA AND LCMHC

A Professional Disclosure Statement is a printed document that includes the following information:

1. name of licensee or applicant;
2. the licensee's or applicant's highest relevant degree, year degree received, discipline of degree (e.g., counseling, school counseling), and name of institution granting the degree;
names and numbers of all relevant credentials (licenses, certificates, or registrations);
number of years of counseling experience;
description of services offered and clientele (populations) served;
length of sessions, specific fee or range of fees charged per session (if no fee is charged, a statement to that effect), and methods of payments for services, including information about billing or insurance reimbursement;
an explanation of confidentiality, including responsibilities and exceptions (e.g., child or elder abuse, court order);
a statement of procedure for registering complaints, including the full name, address, and telephone number of the Board's office;
signature and date spaces for both the client and licensee; and
level of licensure and whether the licensee is under supervision. If under supervision, include name of supervisor.

A current copy of this statement shall be provided to each client prior to the performance of professional counseling services. An updated Professional Disclosure Statement shall be submitted at the time of renewal to the Board's office at 2-C Terrace Way, Greensboro, NC 27403. 27403 or electronically by uploading on the Board's website at https://portal.ncblcmhc.org/. The counselor shall retain a file copy of the Professional Disclosure Statement signed by each client.

History Note:  Authority G.S. 90-334; 90-334(h); 90-343;
Eff. July 1, 1994;
Amended Eff. July 1, 2014; January 1, 2010; July 1, 1995;
Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. April 27, 2019;

21 NCAC 53 .0205 COUNSELING EXPERIENCE

(a) The counseling experience required by G.S. 90-336(c)(2) shall include a minimum of 2000 hours of supervised professional practice hours of direct counseling experience. Direct counseling experience "Direct Counseling Experience" shall consist of live contact with individuals, groups, or families through counseling as defined in G.S. 90-330(a)(3)a and b, G.S. 90-330(a)(3)a, b, and d. Experience shall be gained at a rate of no more than 40 hours per week. At least 100 hours of clinical supervision, as defined in Rule .0210 and Rule .0211 of this Section, shall be documented during the minimum of 3000 hours of supervised professional practice experience, as defined in Rule .0208 of this Section. No less than three-quarters of the hours of clinical supervision shall be individual clinical supervision.

(b) Out of state applicants shall satisfy the requirements determined by the Board to be substantially similar to or exceeding those established under Chapter 90 Article 24 and these Rules, endorsements as stated in Rule .0304, or reciprocity agreements, if applicable.

(c) For purposes of this Rule, the term "reciprocity" means the ability of a mental health counselor with an active independent license that does not require supervision and is in good standing, to practice mental health counseling in another state or U.S. jurisdiction.

History Note:  Authority G.S. 90-330(a),(3); 90-334(h),(i); 90-336(c);
Eff. July 1, 1995;
Amended Eff. July 1, 2014; January 1, 2010; July 1, 2006;
Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. April 27, 2019.

21 NCAC 53 .0206 GRADUATE COUNSELING EXPERIENCE

(a) Applicants enrolled in master's programs before July 1, 2015, a separate practicum and internship shall be completed as part of the graduate course of study, with at least 17 hours of graduate counseling supervision, as defined in Rules .0210 and .0211 of this Section. Supervised graduate counseling shall be verified by a university faculty member on forms available on the Board's website, www.ncblcmhc.org, and shall consist of a minimum of 300 hours of supervised graduate counseling experience at a rate of not less than one hour of clinical supervision per 40 hours of graduate counseling experience, as defined by Rule .0701(2)(b) of this Chapter. At least 180 hours of this counseling experience shall be direct counseling experience as defined in Rule .0205 of this Section.

(b)(a) For Applicants applicants who enroll in a master's program on or after apply prior to July 1, 2015, 2022, graduate counseling experience shall consist of the following separate courses:

(1) one or more courses in practicum totaling at least three semester hours or five quarter hours;
(2) one or more courses in internship totaling at least three semester hours or five quarter hours; and
(3) at least 17 hours of graduate counseling supervision as defined in Rules .0210 and .0211 of this Section.

Supervised graduate counseling shall comply with the requirements of Rule .0212 of this Section, shall be verified by a university faculty member on the Verification of Graduate Counseling Experience Form as described in Paragraph (c) of this Rule.

(b) For applicants who apply on or after July 1, 2022, graduate counseling experience shall consist of the following separate courses:

(1) one or more courses in practicum that meet the standards related to practicum of the current version of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), available at www.cacrep.org, at the time of the receipt of application as defined in Rule .0308(a). The practicum courses shall include graduate counseling supervision as defined by the current version of the CACREP Standards at the time of application; and
(2) one or more courses in internship that meet the standards related to internship of the current version of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), available at www.cacrep.org, at the time of the receipt of application as defined in Rule .0308(a). The internship courses shall include graduate counseling supervision as defined by the current version of the CACREP Standards at the time of application.

All internship experiences shall be in a clinical mental health setting that provides substantial opportunities to diagnose, treat, appraise, and assess mental disorders and shall consist of "direct counseling experience" as defined in Rule .0205(a) of this Section. Clinical mental health settings may include private practices, college counseling centers, community agencies, managed behavioral health care organizations, integrated delivery systems hospitals, employee assistance programs, or specialty treatment centers. Verification of
Graduate Counseling Experience Forms, as described in Paragraph (c) of this Rule, shall identify the type of clinical mental health setting.

(c) Verification of Graduate Counseling Experience Form shall contain:

1. the name, title, contact information and signature of the person verifying graduate counseling experience;
2. the name of agency where graduate counseling experience occurred;
3. information regarding university supervisor for the graduate counseling experience;
4. the name, title and credentials of the site supervisor;
5. total hours of individual and group clinical supervision received during graduate counseling experience;
6. whether the experience is practicum or internship;
7. the beginning and end dates of clinical experience;
8. the total number of direct and indirect hours, as defined by CACREP; and
9. the total hours of direct and indirect client contact as defined by CACREP.

The form is available on the Board's website at www.ncblcmhc.org.

History Note: 
Authority G.S. 90-332.1(a)(3); 90-334(h),(i); 90-336(b)(1);
Eff. July 1, 1995;
Amended Eff. July 1, 2014; January 1, 2010;
Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. April 27, 2019.

SECTION .0300 – HOW TO OBTAIN LICENSURE

21 NCAC 53 .0308 RECEIPT OF APPLICATION

(a) All requirements for applications shall be satisfied in accordance with Article 24 of G.S. 90 and the rules of this Chapter within two years from the date of receipt of the application or the application shall be denied by the Board. Application shall be deemed to be received by the Board when the Board's office receives the application and processes the application fee. The applicant may reapply for licensure and shall be subject to the requirements at the time of reapplication.

(b) Change of Address. The applicant shall inform the Board of any change in his or her mailing address or email address within 60 days after any change. Updated address information shall be submitted on forms available on the Board's website, www.ncblcmhc.org.

(c) Change of Name. The applicant shall inform the Board of any change in his or her name within 60 days after any change. A name change form shall be submitted on forms available on the Board's website, www.ncblcmhc.org and shall include any required legal documentation, such as a marriage certificate, certificate accompanied by the documents verifying the name change, divorce decree or court order.

History Note: 
Authority G.S. 90-334(h); 90-336(a);
Eff. July 1, 1995;
Amended Eff. July 1, 2014; January 1, 2010; July 1, 2006;
Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. April 27, 2019.

SECTION .0600 – RENEWAL OF LICENSE

21 NCAC 53 .0601 RENEWAL PERIOD

Newly issued licenses shall be effective upon the date of issuance by the Board and shall expire on the second June 30 thereafter. At least 45 days prior to expiration of each license, the Board shall mail by regular U.S. mail or electronic mail a notice for license renewal to the person licensed for the current licensure period. The renewal period for a newly issued license may be less than two years. Following the first renewal of a newly issued license, the renewal period shall be two years and shall run from July 1 in the first year through June 30 in the second year. A licensee whose license has been suspended shall not practice until the license is renewed.

History Note: 
Authority G.S. 90-334(h); 90-339;
Eff. July 1, 1995;
Amended Eff. July 1, 2014;
Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. April 27, 2019.

21 NCAC 53 .0602 RENEWAL FOR LICENSURE FORM; ADDRESS CHANGE; NAME CHANGE

(a) License renewal information shall be on the Renewal for Licensure forms available on the Board's website www.ncblcmhc.org and submitted either electronically or mailed in paper format to the Board's office as set forth in Rule .0204 of this Chapter. The licensee shall provide general contact information, including the licensee's email address, licensure or credentials, and all continuing counselor education information for the past two years. All requested information shall be provided and the forms shall be signed and dated. Documents that shall be included with the renewal form are the following:

1. certificate of completion of the jurisprudence examination for the level of license that is being renewed;
2. the ethics attestation statement;
3. an updated Professional Disclosure Statement; and
4. payment of renewal fee.
(b) Change of Address. The licensee shall inform the Board of any change in his or her mailing address or email address within 60 days after any change. Updated address information shall be submitted on forms available on the Board’s website, www.ncblcmhc.org.

(c) Change of Name. The licensee shall inform the Board of any change in his or her name within 60 days after any change. A name change form shall be submitted on forms available on the Board’s website, www.ncblcmhc.org and shall include any required legal documentation, such as a marriage certificate, certificate accompanied by the documents verifying the name change, divorce decree or court order.

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-334(g); 90-336(a); 90-339(b); Eff. July 1, 1995; Amended Eff. July 1, 2014; Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. April 27, 2019.

21 NCAC 53.0604 FAILURE TO SECURE SUFFICIENT CONTINUING EDUCATION/RENEWAL OF LICENSE
Licensed clinical mental health counselor associates, licensed clinical mental health counselors, and licensed clinical mental health counselor supervisors who fail to document sufficient continuing counselor education to renew their licenses by the expiration date of June 30 shall be notified in writing by the Board of the deficiencies, that their licenses have expired, and that the licensee shall not practice until it is renewed. Licensed clinical mental health counselor associates, licensed clinical mental health counselors, and licensed clinical mental health counselor supervisors who are unable to provide documentation of sufficient continuing counselor education to renew their licenses have the following options:

1. Within one year of expiration, licensed clinical mental health counselor associates, licensed clinical mental health counselors, and licensed clinical mental health counselor supervisors shall complete the required hours of continuing counselor education and an additional 20 hours of continuing counselor education for the purpose of renewal of the expired license. Continuing counselor education acquired during this additional time period for the purpose of renewal of an expired license shall not applied to the next renewal period. Once these requirements have been met, the license shall be renewed.

2. Request an extension in writing from the Board. Requests shall be received by the Board no later than May 1st of the year of expiration. An extension shall be granted for:
   (a) military deployment;
   (b) major illness documented by a licensed healthcare provider, lasting longer than three months of self, partner, or child; or of self or a member of an immediate family, such as a partner, child, parent, sibling, or dependent;
   (c) death of partner or child, a member of an immediate family, such as partner, child, parent, sibling, or dependent.

Extensions shall be granted for a period of up to one year. If the extension is approved, any continuing counselor education acquired during the extension shall not be applied to the next renewal period. Once these requirements have been met, the license shall be renewed and the licensee may resume practice.

Failure to complete one of the above listed options shall mean that a license shall be reissued only upon a new application for a license, and all current licensure requirements shall apply to the new application.

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-334(g), (h); 90-339; Eff. July 1, 1995; Amended Eff. July 1, 2014; January 1, 2010; Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. April 27, 2019; Amended Eff. January 1, 2020 (S.L. 2019-240, s. 3.(k)).

SECTION .0700 – LICENSED CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR ASSOCIATE

21 NCAC 53.0701 LICENSED CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR ASSOCIATE
A license as a licensed clinical mental health counselor associate shall be granted by the Board to persons preparing for the practice of counseling who have:

1. if applied before July 1, 2022, completed graduate training as defined in G.S. 90-336(b)(1); G.S. 90-336(b1); and
2. completed a minimum of three semester hours or five quarter hours in each of the required coursework areas of study as follows:
   (a) Coursework in Helping Relationships in Counseling. Studies in this area provide an understanding of counseling and consultation processes, including the following:
      (i) counseling and consultation theories, including both individual and systems perspectives, as well as coverage of relevant research and factors considered in applications;
      (ii) basic interviewing, assessment, and counseling skills;
      (iii) counselor or consultant characteristics and behaviors that influence mental health counseling relationships, including age, gender, and ethnic differences; verbal and nonverbal behaviors; personal behaviors; and personal characteristics, orientations, and skills;
      (iv) client or consultee characteristics and behaviors that influence mental health counseling relationships, including age, gender, and ethnic differences; verbal and nonverbal behaviors; and personal behaviors; personal characteristics, orientations and skills; and
(b) Coursework in Practicum and Internship. Practicum and internship experience should be provided in a supervised graduate counseling experience in a regionally accredited program of study. This graduate counseling experience shall be completed as defined in Rule .0206 of this Chapter.

(c) Coursework in Professional Orientation to Counseling. Studies in this area provide an understanding of all aspects of professional functioning, including history, roles, organizational structures, ethics, standards, and credentialing, including the following:
(i) history of the counseling profession, including significant factors and events;
(ii) professional roles and functions of counselors, including similarities and differences with other types of professionals;
(iii) professional organizations (primarily the ACA, its divisions, branches and affiliates), including membership benefits, activities, services to members, and current emphases;
(iv) ethical standards of the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) or ACA and related ethical and legal issues, and their applications to various professional activities (e.g., appraisal, group work);
(v) clinical mental health counselor preparation standards, their evolution, and current applications;
(vi) clinical mental health counselor credentialing, including counselor certification, licensure and accreditation practices and standards, and the effects of public policy on these issues;
(vii) public policy processes, including the role of the clinical mental health counselor advocating on behalf of the profession and its clientele; and
(viii) ethical considerations.

(d) Coursework in Human Growth and Development Theories in Counseling. Studies in this area provide an understanding of the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental levels, relevant to counseling practice, including the following:
(i) theories of individual and family development, and transitions across the life span;
(ii) theories of learning and personality development;
(iii) human behavior, including an understanding of developmental crises, disability, addictive behavior, psychopathology, and environmental factors as they affect both normal and abnormal behavior;
(iv) counseling strategies for facilitating development over the life span; and
(v) ethical considerations.

(e) Coursework in Social and Cultural Foundations in Counseling. Studies in this area provide an understanding of issues and trends in a multicultural and diverse society that impact clinical mental health counselors and the counseling profession, including, the following:
(i) multicultural and pluralistic trends, including characteristics and concerns of counseling individuals from diverse groups;
(ii) attitudes and behavior based on factors such as age, race, religious preferences, physical disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity and culture, family patterns, gender, socioeconomic status, and intellectual ability;
(iii) individual, family, and group counseling strategies with diverse populations; and
(iv) ethical considerations.

(f) Coursework in Group Counseling Theories and Processes. Studies in this area provide an understanding of group development, dynamics, and counseling theories; group counseling methods and skills; and other group work approaches, including the following:
(i) principals of group dynamics, including group counseling components, developmental stage theories, and group members’ roles and behaviors;
(ii) group leadership styles and approaches, including characteristics of various types of group leaders and leadership styles;
(iii) theories of group counseling, including commonalities, distinguishing characteristics, and pertinent research and literature;
(iv) group counseling methods, including group counselor orientations and behaviors, ethical standards, appropriate selection criteria, and methods of evaluation of effectiveness;
(v) approaches used for other types of group work in counseling, including task groups, support groups, and therapy groups; and
(vi) ethical considerations.

(g) Coursework in Career Counseling and Lifestyle Development. Studies in this area provide an understanding of career counseling, development, and related life factors, including the following:
(i) career-counseling theories and decision-making process;
(ii) career, avocational, educational, and labor market information resources; visual and print media; and computer-based career information systems;
(iii) career-counseling program planning, organization, implementation, administration, and evaluation;
(iv) interrelationships among work, family, and other life roles and factors, including multicultural and gender issues as related to career counseling;
(v) career and educational placement counseling, follow-up, and evaluation;
(vi) assessment instruments and techniques relevant to career counseling;
(vii) computer-based career-development applications and strategies, including computer-assisted career-counseling systems;
(viii) career-counseling processes, techniques and resources, including those applicable to specific populations; and
(ix) ethical considerations.

(h) Coursework in Assessment in Counseling. Studies in this area provide an understanding of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation in counseling practice, including the following:
(i) theoretical and historical bases for assessment techniques in counseling;
(ii) validity, including evidence for establishing content, construct, and empirical validity;
(iii) reliability, including methods of establishing stability, internal, and equivalence reliability;
(iv) appraisal methods, including environmental assessment, performance assessment, individual and group test and inventory methods, behavioral observations, and computer-managed and computer-assisted methods;
(v) psychometric statistics, including types of assessment scores, measures of central tendency, indices of variability, standard errors, and correlations;
(vi) age, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, and cultural factors related to the use of assessment and evaluation in counseling services;
(vii) strategies for selecting, administering, interpreting and using assessment and evaluation instruments, and techniques in counseling; and
(viii) ethical considerations.

(i) Coursework in Research and Program Evaluation. Studies in this area provide an understanding of types of research methods, basic statistics, and ethical and legal consideration in research, including the following:
(i) basic types of research methods to include qualitative and quantitative research designs;
(ii) basic parametric and nonparametric statistics;
(iii) principles, practices, and applications of needs assessment and program evaluation;
(iv) uses of computers for data management and analysis; and
(v) ethical and legal considerations.

(2) If applied on or after July 1, 2022, completed graduate training as defined in G.S. 90-336(b2) and the required courses of the current version of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), available at www.cacrep.org, at the time of the receipt of application as defined in Rule .0308(a). The graduate coursework shall include, but is not limited to, a minimum of three semester hours or five quarter hours in each of the required coursework areas of study as follows:
(a) Theories of counseling and psychotherapy;
(b) Evaluation and appraisal procedures;
(c) Group dynamics, theories and techniques;
(d) Counseling techniques and helping skills;
(e) Multicultural counseling;
(f) Professional issues and ethics;
(g) Research;
(h) Career counseling;
(i) Psychosocial and human development across the lifespan;
(j) Clinical practicum and clinical mental health internship; and
(k) Use and application of the current version of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), appraisal and assessment of mental disorders, psychopathology, diagnosis, treatment and treatment planning, and evidence-based intervention and practice; and

(3) passed an examination as defined in Rule .0305 of this Chapter; and
(4) submitted a complete application for licensed clinical mental health counselor associate.

To prevent a lapse in licensure, licensed clinical mental health counselor associates who desire to become licensed clinical mental health counselors shall complete the application process for the licensed clinical mental health counselor licensure no earlier than 60 days prior to expiration of their licensed clinical mental health counselor associate license or upon completion of the supervised professional practice hours as set forth in Rule .0208 of this Chapter to allow for administrative processing and Board action.

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-334(h); 90-336(a); 90-336(b); 90-336 (b1); 90-336 (b2);
Eff. January 1, 2010;
Amended Eff. July 1, 2014; January 1, 2010;
Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. April 27, 2019;
Amended Eff. January 1, 2020 (S.L. 2019-240, s. 3.(k)).

SECTION .0900 – REGISTRATION FOR A PROFESSIONAL ENTITY

21 NCAC 53 .0902 RENEWAL OF CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION FOR A PROFESSIONAL ENTITY

A notification for renewal of professional corporation or professional limited liability company shall be sent by either U.S. mail or electronic mail to each registered entity a minimum of 60 days prior to the December 31 expiration date. The Board shall renew the certificate of registration upon receipt of the completed written renewal application of the holder and the renewal fee. Failure to renew
by the due date shall result in notification to the Secretary of State's Office to suspend the Articles of Incorporation or Articles of Organization.

History Note: Authority G.S. 55B-11; 57D-2-01(c); 90-334(h);
Eff. July 1, 2014;
Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. April 27, 2019.