



South Carolina Counseling Association

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SC Senate Medical Affairs Committee:

We are writing on behalf of more than 450 of South Carolina's Counseling Professionals in opposition to the proposed Amendment to the Medical Ethics and Diversity Act (*SC S 811*). We are opposing this amendment on the grounds that it violates our professional code of ethics and compromises our professional values.

Our professional code of ethics specifically states:

A.4.b. Personal Values Counselors are aware of—and avoid imposing—their own values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Counselors respect the diversity of clients, trainees, and research participants and seek training in areas in which they are at risk of imposing their values onto clients, especially when the counselor's values are inconsistent with the client's goals or are discriminatory in nature.

A.11.b. Values Within Termination and Referral Counselors refrain from referring prospective and current clients based solely on the counselor's personally held values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Counselors respect the diversity of clients and seek training in areas in which they are at risk of imposing their values onto clients, especially when the counselor's values are inconsistent with the client's goals or are discriminatory in nature.

C.5. Nondiscrimination Counselors do not condone or engage in discrimination against prospective or current clients, students, employees, supervisees, or research participants based on age, culture, disability, ethnicity, race, religion/spirituality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital/ partnership status, language preference, socioeconomic status, immigration status, or any basis proscribed by law.

It is our belief that adherence to the proposed Amendment would result in unethical and discriminatory practice to current and future clients.

Our professional code of ethics also specifically states:

C.2.a. Boundaries of Competence Counselors practice only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience, state and national professional credentials, and appropriate professional experience. Whereas multicultural counseling competency is required across all counseling specialties, counselors gain knowledge, personal awareness, sensitivity, dispositions, and skills pertinent to being a culturally competent counselor in working with a diverse client population.

Counselors who are clinically trained and hold professional licensure are required to seek out knowledge and skills to work with diverse client populations. Refusing treatment to client populations based on personal bias is an explicit violation of our ethical responsibility and the complete antithesis of our calling as professional counselors.

Sincerely,

South Carolina Counseling Association

**South Carolina Counseling Association
Executive Council**