ILLINOIS CERTIFICATION BOARD

ICB

NEWSLETTER

What's New

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- And More!

Summer
2026

INTERVIEW WITH RETIRED BOARD MEMBER: GEORGE RAFEEDIE

GEORGE RAFEEDIE

George has 5 decades of experience in behavioral healthcare. He is a retired USAF Captain where he spent 21 years providing and developing substance abuse services. He has worked in community-based programs in Illinois and Missouri as a counselor, DUI assessor, clinical coordinator, and program director in variety of settings that include outpatient, residential, and methadone treatment. George worked for the Illinois Department of Human Services/Division of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse 2001–2016 as a DUI Program Liaison and monitored all categories of DASA licensed programs with a focus on intervention services. He retired in 2016 but remained active in the field providing clinical supervision, training and consultation services until 2026. George was active with The Illinois Certification Board and provided several trainings over the last 30 years.

WHAT WAS OR IS YOUR SPECIALTY IN THE FIELD? WHICH CREDENTIAL(S) DO YOU HOLD?

I worked in every aspect of substance abuse treatment over the years and in managerial leadership positions. However, as the years and experience grew, I truly enjoyed group counseling, training and teaching. So those three activities became my specialty. CSADC (retired).

WHEN YOU FIRST STARTED OUT, WHAT WAS ONE OF THE BIGGEST SURPRISES YOU ENCOUNTERED?

I think it was how little I actually knew about addiction in general. In retrospect how little understanding the human condition as it relates to addiction. With less than two years actual experience in 1974, I was stationed in Thailand. 98% pure heroin for $5 and you could stay high all day every day. Thailand was a true training ground for understanding addiction.

WHAT DID YOU FIND MOST REWARDING IN YOUR DAY-TO-DAY PRACTICE?

It was always important to me to meet the patient where they were at. Then to provide a safe space to encourage change and growth. Seeing that change and growth was always the best part of any day. As I spent more time leading, mentoring, training – seeing positive change in new counselors and colleagues was equally rewarding. My favorite activity is teaching and training.

WHO WAS A GREAT A MENTOR TO YOU? WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THEM?

I was in the USAF and had so many mentors that pointed me in the right direction. An older AA member made me go to open AA meetings because I was book smart but, in his words, "dumb as a rock." In Thailand my supervisor taught me survival skills and how to present briefings and trainings. In New York, my supervisor was an excellent group therapist, so co-facilitating with him was like going to school.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR BEHAVIORAL MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE USE PROFESSIONALS WHO FEEL BURNED OUT?

First, let's be clear: burnout is real and can cause many work and personal related problems. Learn to take care of yourself and make time for the things that are important to you. Often people talk about self-care, which is very important. However, people don't spend time taking care of themselves. If you want to survive in this business: practice self-care.

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU COULD TEACH THE NEXT GENERATION OF BEHAVIORAL MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE USE PROFESSIONALS?

I would teach them the importance of setting good ethical boundaries and self-care. Additionally, I would want them to understand the importance of keeping good records and establishing solid meaningful treatment plans as road maps for the patient's recovery.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST HOPEFUL FOR IN THIS FIELD?

That's an interesting question. I hope that the identity of the substance abuse treatment becomes a priority in behavioral healthcare.

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOUR ILLINOIS COLLEAGUES?

Always advocate for good treatment services. Be supportive of political leaders that champion healthcare, human rights and equal opportunity.

George, on behalf of the entire ICB Staff and Board of Directors, we thank you for your dedication to the field and to ICB.

Congratulations on your retirement – we wish you all the best.

FIVE WAYS TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF (EVEN WHEN YOU DON'T FEEL LIKE IT)

If you want to survive in this business: practice self-care.

1. Listen to music that matches your mood.
2. Designate ten to twenty minutes of quiet time.
3. Take an extra shower.
4. Go for a walk - even a short one.
5. Talk with a trusted friend.

CERTIFIED ALCOHOL & DRUG COUNSELOR (CADC) WORKFORCE EXPANSION PROGRAM

IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

CADC WORKFORCE EXPANSION PROGRAM RECIPIENTS SHARE WHAT THE PROGRAM HAS MEANT TO THEM

"For me, the CADC program has provided not only financial assistance, but also a strong sense of direction.

I have always known I wanted to pursue a career in counseling psychology, and like many of my peers, I have personal experiences related to addiction. However, I was unsure how to take the necessary steps to move forward.

This program has given me both the path and the understanding to confidently work toward my future."

–Ran Iannone, student at The Chicago School of Psychology and CADC Workforce Expansion Program grantee

ABOUT THE CERTIFIED ALCOHOL & DRUG COUNSELOR (CADC) WORKFORCE EXPANSION PROGRAM

Since May 2023, the CADC Workforce Expansion Program has issued 2,722 awards across four fiscal years and up to eight fund types, through both an individual applicant track and an institutional wrap-around track (with 9 participating Accredited Training Programs (ATPs)). The program has meaningfully diversified the credential pipeline: Black/African American participants represent 26.3% of awardees vs. 10.2% of existing holders. Awardees skew younger (41.2% ages 25–44) than the existing workforce (mean age 51.3).

Before the grant: 189 CADCs issued per year on average (2017–2022). After the grant: 317 per year on average (2023–2025), +64% increase. In 2025 alone, ICB issued 424 credentials, 124% above the pre-grant baseline and the highest single-year total in the program's history. The program has not merely maintained the pre-grant trajectory; it has fundamentally changed it.

The CADC Workforce Expansion Program is an initiative of the Illinois Certification Board (ICB) and the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) / Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR).

CADC WORKFORCE EXPANSION PROGRAM

SCHOOL YEAR: 25-26

249 GRANTEES AT PARTICIPATING ATPs

BETWEEN FY25 AND FY26

15% INCREASE IN CADC APPLICATIONS

WITHIN FY26 PROGRAM YEAR

65% OF STUDENTS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THEIR CADC COURSEWORK

KICKING OFF FY27 WITH 85 GRANT AWARDS FOR CADC CERTIFICATION AND RECERTIFICATION

ICB RESPONSE TIMELINES

Applications

ICB aims to review and respond to initial certification submissions within **30 days of the date of submission.**

Please note: Each time a new component is submitted, it ***resets*** *the date of submission to the most recent date received.*

Recertifications

ICB reviews recertification submissions on a rolling basis, 30 days prior to recertification date.

General Inquiries

ICB aims to respond to general inquiries by phone or to info@iaodapca.org within 3-5 business days.

Please note: response and review times may be impacted by volume, staff travel, illness, holiday closures, or other circumstances. 30 days is a guideline, not a guarantee. Submit early!

IC&RC SCORING LETTER CHANGE

July 2026 - Effective July 1st, 2026, the score reports provided to candidates who pass an IC&RC exam will not include an exam score. **The report will only show that the candidate passed the exam. No domain performance information will be included.**

This change aligns IC&RC's score reporting procedure with best practices for the certification industry and reduces the risk of misrepresentation or misuse of exam results. IC&RC's exams are designed to assess a candidate's proficiency against an established, psychometrically-derived minimum standard (pass = proficient; fail = not proficient). They are not designed to measure levels of proficiency (e.g., entry, advanced) within a single exam form. Removing the exam score from the report minimizes the chance that professionals may be compared to others, or their competence be further scrutinized, based on their score. It is an equitable solution; all candidates who pass the exam are recognized as proficient.

The score reports for candidates who fail their IC&RC exam will remain the same. Their score and performance in each of the content domains will still be provided to assist with their exam re-take efforts.

IC&RC and its testing vendor, Prometric, will have access to all candidate scores per our standard processes, but scores for individual candidates who pass will not be provided to Member Boards, non-Member Boards, or their respective candidates.

OZEMPIC SHOWN TO REDUCE ALCOHOL CRAVINGS

May 2026 - A study in *The Lancet* found that people taking semaglutide (Ozempic/Wegovy) had "significantly fewer drinking days" than those not taking the drug.

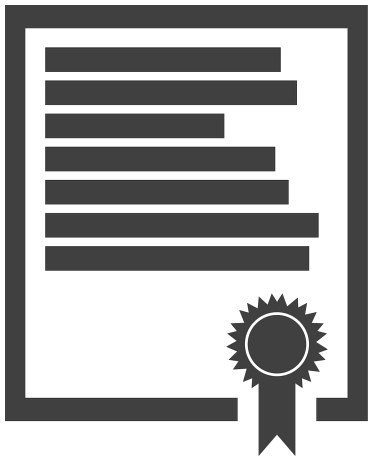
According to senior researcher Dr. Anders Fink-Jensen, a clinical professor at Mental Health Center Copenhagen "To our knowledge, this randomized controlled trial is the first to show that once-weekly semaglutide reduces heavy-drinking days and … drinking-risk levels in treatment-seeking patients with alcohol use disorder ..."

Learn more.

Trouble Finding Your Certificate?

It's in Certemy!

Log into your Certemy account and check your digital wallet.



ICB has not mailed certificates since July 2, 2024.

IMPORTANT DATES

October 21, 2026
2026 Inaugural ICB Gala & Awards

October 21-23, 2026
Fall Conference

March 17-19, 2027
Spring Conference

ICB AT-A-GLANCE

- Fiscal year runs July-June
- 10 employees
- Most years served to date by an employee: 27 years
- Based in Springfield, Illinois
- Illinois Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Professional Certification Association, Inc. d/b/a Illinois Certification Board (ICB)
- Mission: To protect the public by providing competency-based credentialing of Human Service Professionals.

LOCAL LEADER FIGHTS FOR SENIORS

July 2026 - Representative Lauren Underwood, from Illinois' 14th District and a registered nurse, introduced bipartisan legislation Congress to improve access to substance use disorder treatment for seniors. The Residential Recovery for Seniors Act would require Medicare to cover high-quality residential addiction treatment programs. The legislation is co-led by Reps. Paul Tonko (NY-20), Carol Miller (WV-01), and David Valadao (CA-22).

Learn more.

SAMHSA RELEASES DOWNLOADABLE GUIDE FOR FAMILIES NAVIGATING MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE CARE

June 2026 - Developed through the input of family members and people with lived experience, the guide is intended to help navigate supports and resources with and for a loved one who has a mental health and/or substance use conditions.

Download here.

Illinois Surpasses 1,000 Certified Peer Professionals, Marking Major Milestone in Behavioral Health Workforce Growth

GAMBLING DISORDER DIAGNOSES SPIKE IN STATES THAT LEGALIZED SPORTS BETTING

Diagnoses of gambling disorder rose more than 60% since 2018 in states that have legalized sports betting. Learn more.

WHY DO SO MANY DOCTORS AND NURSES AVOID TREATING PATIENTS WITH ADDICTION?

August 2026 - *Consider This* from NPR looks at why doctors avoid known treatments for patients with addiction, even when proven medical treatments exist.

Listen (or read the transcript) here.

FALL CONFERENCE

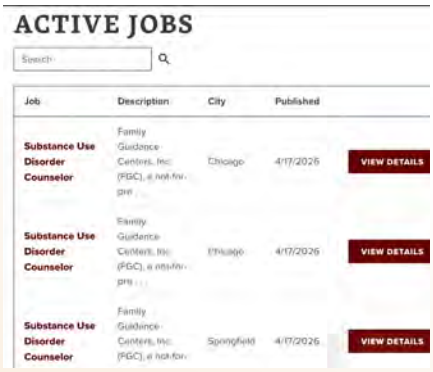
October 21-23, 2026
Northfield Inn, Suites & Conference Center
Springfield, IL

2026 Inaugural ICB Gala & Awards

October 21, 2026 | 7:00pm-9:00pm
Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum
Springfield, IL

Looking for Work?

Check out our Job Board!



Looking for the right certified professional for your organization?

Post a job!

Reach credentialed professionals in Illinois directly by posting open positions on our website.

Advertise with Us

We would love to advertise your services in our quarterly newsletter, which reaches over 7,000 Human Services Professionals across Illinois. Your support not only benefits the Illinois Certification Board, it also promotes your business to a diverse audience that shares your commitment to providing quality resources to people whose lives have been affected by behavioral health issues (substance use and/or mental health).

Your ad will be included in every subsequent newsletter we release in 2026.

Rates

Full page	$900
1/2 page	$450
1/4 page horizontal	$300
1/4 page vertical	$300
1/8 page	$150

To reserve your space and arrange payment, contact:
info@iaodapca.org

We look forward to promoting your business.