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Artists

OHLA, Sex Offender Treatment Board Are Encouraging Qualified Applicants to Obtain Certification as Therapists

Salem, OR, October 20, 2008 — The Oregon Health Licensing Agency (OHLA) and Sex Offender Treatment Board (SOTB) are encouraging mental health professionals who qualify to obtain certification as a sex offender therapist.

The Oregon State Legislature established the SOTB in 2007 and the board has spent the past year consulting OHLA to establish qualification and practice standards for the newly regulated profession.

The Legislature recognized that sex offender therapists “occupy a vital role in protecting the public” in establishing professional certification.

The Legislature also found that curtailing the incidence of recidivism in sex offenders and enhancing the protection of victims and potential victims, “is undermined by a lack of regulated standards of practice and professional responsibility.”

Now that OHLA and the SOTB have established those standards, they are reaching out to stakeholder groups in the corrections, justice, public safety and human services fields to promote the importance of certification.

“We have developed qualifying and professional standards that have set the foundation,” says SOTB Chair Dr. William Davis. “Now we’d like to get the word out that certification is available, viable and in the best interests of therapists and the state.”

Applicants who qualify to obtain certification through the time-limited grandfathering provision have until March 14, 2009 to apply. The grandfathering provision allows applicants without current mental health licensure to become certified if they have documented education and experience in the field.

“We have attempted to reduce some of the initial complexity inherent in the application process by better organizing and presenting information to candidates for certification,” says OHLA Director Susan K. Wilson. “While qualifying standards are high, the application process should be as simple as possible.”

Visit www.oregon.gov/OHLA for more information on the OHLA central agency and Sex Offender Treatment Board.

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