

## West Virginia Board of Examiners in Counseling

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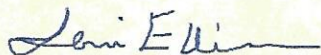
Attorney Patrick Morrissey  
Office of the Attorney General  
1900 Kanawha Blvd. East  
Building 1, Room E-26  
Charleston, WV 25305

Dear Attorney General Morrissey,


We first want to thank you for inviting us to collaborate with your Mr. Anthony Martin when we met on June 30, 2016 to discuss the alternative treatment methods to using opioids for pain management, specifically, the practice of counseling and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. Also attending were Jim Bennett-Licensed Professional Counselor and Mike Brown-RPh & Executive Director of the Pharmacist & Dental Recovery Networks.

As discussed in our meeting, the effects of opioids are widespread and insidious. The addictive properties of opioids are so strong that it seems so many are blindsided by their effects. It is so common for individuals who have surgeries or serious accidents and where pain medication is often necessary for effective treatment. However, the warning signs of potential addiction to these medications may not be as well known. Educating the public on what effects to look for and stressing the importance of communicating the presence of those effects with their doctor is key. Additionally, by educating the public on the benefits of taking a holistic approach for pain management - one that includes multiple modalities such as medical treatment, spiritual support, family intervention and education, and evidence-based counseling practices - we can all be assured we are taking a well-educated, comprehensive, responsible approach to pain intervention that could replace sole reliance on the prescription of opioids.

Prescription drug abuse effects every resident in WV, directly or indirectly, and we are confident that Mr. Morrissey and his staff are moving in the right direction by partnering with the varied health professions and coordinating efforts to educate the public on alternative treatment methods for managing pain. We fully support the efforts and direction taken by you and your staff and we look forward to our continued work together.



Lori Ellison, Ph.D.  
WVBEC Chair



Roxanne Clay  
WVBEC Executive Director