



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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LAWYER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AND MENTAL HEALTH

According to a study conducted by Johns Hopkins University in 1990, the legal profession is the most likely to find its practitioners suffering from depression, and several studies agree that incidents of substance abuse among lawyers can take place at a rate double that of the national average when compared to other professions.

The State Bar of Nevada takes the mental health and support of its members very seriously, and as a result, the board of governors filed a petition with the Nevada Supreme Court in 2012 requesting amendments to Supreme Court Rule 210 to require that all active Nevada attorneys take one hour-long CLE course specifically related to substance abuse, addictive disorders and mental health issues. This requirement, for one Abuse, Addiction and Mental Health (A.A.M.H.) credit, first had to be fulfilled in 2014, and will be mandatory again in 2017. The state bar's CLE department currently has a library of more than a dozen course options available in its online store, available at www.nvbar.org/clecatalog.

In addition to providing a selection of courses that meet the A.A.M.H. requirement, the state bar also provides two programs to support attorneys struggling with addiction or mental health issues. In the coming year, each issue of *Nevada Lawyer* will not only remind attorneys how to access these programs, but will also answer frequently recurring questions regarding the programs' confidentiality, processes and resources. Our goal is to make these programs as approachable as possible, so that every attorney who needs help has enough confidence in the support system to reach out for help before their personal struggles become professional ones.

These two programs are Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers (LCL) and the Nevada Lawyer Assistance Program (NLAP).

For more than 30 years, LCL has supported Nevada attorneys struggling with alcohol, drug and gambling addictions, as well as with stress and depression. The program is managed by volunteer attorneys with shared experiences; they stress compassion and confidentiality, while providing understanding and support to their fellow lawyers. **Learn more about LCL at www.nvbar.org/LCL, or call (866) 828-0022 toll-free or (702) 889-9404.**

In 2013 the state bar launched NLAP, which utilizes the services of a team of addiction medicine physicians, headed by Peter A. Mansky; its offices are separate from the state bar. Lawyers who contact NLAP will speak with a medical professional who can provide the therapy and treatment necessary to help them cope with the stress inherent to the practice of law. Most importantly to many, the program is confidential. **For more information on NLAP, visit www.nvbar.org/NLAP or call (702) 257-6727.**

These two programs work together to support bar members who may be struggling. They provide a variety of options, allowing attorneys to seek help before their struggles escalate and allowing them to address problems before they become potential discipline issues.

We invite your questions about these programs and hope to answer as many of them as possible in future issues of *Nevada Lawyer*. We'll address concerns such as: "Will I be reported to the Office of Bar Counsel?" "If I call with a concern about a fellow attorney, will my identity be revealed to that person?" and "How does the process work after I call?" Our programs take these delicate concerns very seriously, and our rules regarding confidentiality are designed with them in mind. So, if you, or someone you know, are struggling, don't hesitate to inquire. The state bar is genuinely committed to supporting its member attorneys. **NL**