

## LICENSING vs. CERTIFICATION

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### Licensing

A license is a *permission* to do something that otherwise is forbidden. In most cases, a license is *required* or *mandatory* for engaging in that activity. For instance, a driver's license is considered mandatory to drive a car on the public roads. An exception is that a house may be built by someone who is not a licensed contractor.

A license is given by the government, and is a *government privilege*. It, therefore, presumes that the activity in question is a privilege, not a right. The privilege may be bestowed by the federal, state or local government.

A license *involves the power* of the state or province. That is, if one violates the licensing law, either by acting without a license, or failing to uphold the rules governing the license privilege, one is subject to prosecution under the civil or criminal laws of the governing body.

The purpose of licensing, whether admitted or not, is to restrict entry and control a profession or activity.

### Certification

Certification is a statement or declaration that one has completed a course of study, passed an examination, or otherwise met specified criteria for certification.

Certification is not permission to act, but rather a statement of completion or qualification.

Certification is a private matter, issued by a private organization. It does not involve the power of the state or province and is not a state or provincial privilege.

Certification is based on the premise that there is a right to work.

Certification only provides the consumer with more information about a practitioner. It also gives practitioners a way to increase their competency through a course of study and exams, and to advertise or inform others of their completion of this course of study.

The purpose of certification is mainly to set standards, educate practitioners and inform the public.

### Registration

Registration is similar to certification but can also be granted under state or provincial governmental organizations. Dietitians, for example, are registered in most states. The registering organization, the American Dietetic Association, is a private group but in Canada the College of Dietetic is a government licensing organization.

## IMPLICATIONS OF LICENSING VERSUS CERTIFICATION

Licensing presumes that an activity is forbidden until it is permitted through a license. Certification presumes that an activity is permitted by right. It presumes a right to work. This means that one is not automatically provided with a job. Rather it means that one cannot be denied the opportunity to seek work.

Licensing increases the power of the government and their powers to decide who to consult for services shifts from the consumer to a government licensing board. By the same degree to which it empowers the government, licensing decreases the power of the individual consumer. Certification empowers the consumer, not the government.

Licensing restricts entry into a particular field of activity. Certification does not restrict entry at all. It merely

informs and distinguishes those who have completed courses or examinations pertaining to a field of work.

Licensing provides a method of strict control of the behavior of those in a particular field of activity. If the licensees do not follow prescribed rules, they risk loss of the ability to work at all. Certification may be used for control, however, it is more flexible. If those who are certified do not follow certain rules, certification may be withdrawn. However, they may still practice their trade, albeit without certification.

## **SUMMARY**

The definitions, features and implications of licensing and certification are summarized in the following chart for quick reference.

### **LICENSING**

- *A permission to perform an activity.*
- *Generally is mandatory to perform the activity.*
- *Involves the police power of the government.*
- *Presumes that working in the particular field of activity is a privilege.*
- *Establishment of licensing shifts the activity from a right to privilege. The privilege is given and may be withdrawn at any time by the issuing agency.*
- *Increases the power of government, and reduces the power of the individual consumer.*
- *The purpose is to restrict entry and strictly control the profession or activity.*

### **CERTIFICATION**

- *A statement of completion or meeting a standard.*
- *Voluntary.*
- *Does not involve the police power of the state.*
- *Presumes that working the field is a right.*
- *Certification may be withdrawn at any time by the issuing agency. However, this does not stop one from working but one from declaring certification in particular field.*
- *Preserves and enhances the power of the individual consumer to decide upon the practitioner of his choice.*
- *The purpose is mainly to inform and educate.*

*NOTE: The Boards are not Licensing organizations but certifying organization which uphold standards as established by the World Organization of Natural Medicine for Natural Medicine and Integrative Medicine profession..*

## **REGULATION**

*Professions whose scopes of practice pose risk of harm need regulation from government. Non-regulated professions are not registered under the government established regulatory bodies but are instead must be represented by certifying boards or professional association that upholds standards. **Certification under** a certifying organization provides the consumer with more information about a practitioner. It also gives practitioners a way to increase their competency through a course of study and exams, and to advertise or inform others of their completion of this course of study.*

Insurance companies will provide professional liability insurance or reimbursement for member's services to unregulated practitioners who are certified and are members in good standing of a certifying board or a credible professional association.

Potential members must demonstrate that they have attained specific standards of competency to assure the public that they have met the educational, ethical and upgrading standards of the certifying body to which they are accountable.

**"Doctor "Medical Doctor "MD", is protected title of the allopathic medical community, "Allopathic Medicine" all systems of medicine which use drugs (patented and synthetic medicine) and surgery. It is contrary to the concepts of natural/ Integrative medicine for a practitioner to give any impression that he or she is an allopathic "Doctor "medical practitioner without evidence of a license to practice allopathic medicine.**