

# The History and Development of the Alabama Division of the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association

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## **Abstract**

The Alabama Division of the American Rehabilitation Association is an organization committed to representing those counselors who work in the field of rehabilitation across the state. The division is focused on offering leadership within the field of rehabilitation counseling, promoting professional development opportunities for counselors, and increasing collaboration between rehabilitation counselors and other social service professionals.

The Alabama Division of the American Rehabilitation Association (ALDARCA) was established in the spring of 1987. Pam Mobley served as the first president of ALDARCA and David Head was the president-elect (Head & Mobley, 1987). The impetus for the charter was a meeting between the commissioner for the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS), rehabilitation counselors at ADRS, and ALACES members to discuss how to best assist students with disabilities (Head & Mobley). In addition, the founding members believed that creating a division that would serve to represent counselors working in the rehabilitation field would increase training opportunities for members. "My experience has been that a vast majority of rehabilitation counselors do not travel to the national ACA conference but do attend the ALCA annual conference" (P. Mobley, personal communication, August 18, 2006). By creating a division for those working in the field of

rehabilitation counseling, concurrent sessions were offered that focused on issues of interest to members of ALDARCA.

According to Pam Mobley (personal communication, August 18, 2006), the process of starting the division began two years prior to its approval as an official division of the Alabama Counseling Association. In order to become an official division, those working to establish it had to create bylaws that were compatible with ALCA (formerly the Alabama Association of Counseling and Development, ACA, and American Rehabilitation Counseling Association.

When the ALDARCA charter was established, the members agreed that the purpose of the chapter would be the same as the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association. Head and Mobley (1987) stated that the purpose of ALDARCA was to:

Provide the means for personal and professional relationships, encourage and promote research and disseminate the results, collaborate with other professional organizations, formulate and foster the maintenance of standards among rehabilitation counselors, and exercise leadership in the developing science and profession of rehabilitation counseling (pp. 51-52).

This is still the purpose of ALDARCA and reflects the division's relationship to the national division. The division began with approximately 22 members (Head & Mobley, 1987). The division has

continued to grow since that time. Currently, ALDARCA has 66 active members and 173 inactive members.

One of the main goals of ALDARCA is to increase membership and become a more active division of the Alabama Counseling Association. The current division president is working on creating a newsletter to update ALDARCA members on rehabilitation counseling programs around the state as well as programs offered by the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. Members of ALDARCA met at the Annual Alabama Counseling Association Conference in Birmingham, Alabama in November to discuss the future of the division. At the meeting, new officers were elected and future goals were discussed.

A major issue facing the division is becoming more active as a division, in both membership and overall involvement. Members of ALDARCA are encouraged to submit presentation proposals for the ALCA annual conference as well as articles for publication in the ALCA journal. ♦

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#### **REFERENCES**

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