

Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapy

Quarterly Board Meeting

January 22, 2021, 8:30 AM - 12:33 PM

- **Board Members Present: Lisa Merchant (Chair), Russ Bartee, Kenneth Bateman (his final meeting, as he is rolling off the board after this meeting), George Francis IV, Evelyn Husband-Thompson, Anthony Scoma, Jeanene Smith, Richard Stoglin, Daniel Parrish (first meeting as a board member)**
1. Discussions about whether to get rid of board meeting minutes in favor of other methods of getting meeting info to others, such as uploading video or audio recordings to a service such as YouTube. Writing up meeting minutes in their current form is time consuming for staff, and Darryl Spinks, Executive Director of BHEC, does not want staff to do both. The board considered will consider other alternatives, but they do not wish to do away with meeting minutes altogether. This issue was tabled without action.
 2. BHEC may soon put together an ad hoc workgroup to address what areas they need to standardize across the four mental health boards. This is not official yet, but could be proposed soon. In addition to representatives from the boards, they also hope the workgroup may include representatives from other stakeholder organizations. TAMFT may be one such group. *[Side note: This was mentioned in the midst of a discussion about enforceability of the prohibition against sexual relationships between clients and therapists after a time that records may have been legally and ethically purged. Without such records, that prohibition may not be enforceable, as per board legal council. The BHEC workgroup was identified as a possible venue for working through that issue. TAMFT entered official public comment on this issue.]*
 3. As of February 1, 2021, the board will only receive online licensure application submissions. After that date, paper submissions will be returned with instructions on how to submit online.
 4. BHEC recently ruled that members of the military may be able to use military experience towards some academic requirements for licensure. The Licensing Standards Committee will meet 9 AM – 12 PM, February 11, 2021 to discuss a possible matrix to assist staff in how to apply that experience. The public is not invited to this meeting, but the public will have a chance to respond when the matrix is presented to the full board at a future public meeting.
 5. The board discussed possibly raising or eliminating the current limitation for LMFT Associates of 500 direct service hours via technology-assisted services (TAS). The professional members on the board believe that to permanently

remove the limitation would be a mistake given the importance of face-to-face interaction for training purposes. Given the unique extenuating circumstances of the past year due to COVID-19, however, there may be both the need and ability to temporarily suspend the rule. The board decided at this point to not take any action, but they would look into the possibilities of a temporary suspension. More legal research and consultation with the Governor's office was needed before action could be taken. TAMFT entered official comment in support of temporarily easing this restriction.

6. In light of COAMFTE recently changing the required direct contact hours requirement at the Masters level, the board considered changing their Masters level experience requirement to match that of COAMFTE. This would involve raising the required direct hours from 150 to 300 and the number of required relational hours from 75 to 100. After some discussion, this matter was tabled without the board taking any action. It appeared that the majority of the board was not in favor of this change.
7. Because of feedback from licensee, the board discussed the possibility of changing the required online CE hours that may be completed asynchronously. The board generally decided that the live/synchronous requirement continued to be important and decided not to take any action on the matter.
8. The Board reiterated its desire to get out into the community and speak on behalf of the board around the state.
9. Darryl Spinks brought to the Board's attention a recent proposal to possibly enter into a compact with other states and licensing boards that might allow licensees to potentially practice in compact members states with their Texas license in a limited capacity. While not the same as reciprocity, it would allow greater flexibility in providing services, particularly for licensees who practice around the board of the state. The board expressed interest in learning more about this compact.
10. Next TSBEMFT meetings: April 16, July 23
11. Next BHEC meeting: May 4

Public comment submitted on behalf of TAMFT

1. Welcome to Mr. Parrish
2. Thanks to Dr. Bateman for his service to the board
3. Encouragement for the board and BHEC to continue looking at the prohibition about sexual relationships with former clients. TAMFT supports this prohibition and would like for BHEC to find a way to enforce the rule without eliminating it.
4. Encouragement for the board to continue looking for options to assist LMFT Associates in counting hours through TAS, as many of them had their ability to practice face-to-face reduced or eliminated during the past year.