



Division of Legislative Audit

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SUMMARY OF: A Sunset Review of the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, Board of Marital and Family Therapy, September 21, 2009.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

In accordance with Title 24 and Title 44 of the Alaska Statutes, we have reviewed the activities of the Board of Marital and Family Therapy (BMFT). As required by state law, the legislative committees of reference are to consider this report when determining whether to extend the termination date for BMFT. Currently under AS 08.03.010(c)(11), the board will terminate on June 30, 2010. If the legislature does not extend the termination date for the board, BMFT will have one year to conclude its administrative operations.

REPORT CONCLUSIONS

BMFT should continue to regulate marital and family therapists and associates. Except for the significant issue of postponing regulation changes, the board is operating efficiently and effectively. BMFT is serving the public interest by promoting the competence and integrity of those who provide services to the public as licensed marital and family therapists and associates.

The termination date for BMFT should be extended four years – until June 30, 2014. This extension term is half of the eight-year maximum allowed per statute in recognition that BMFT has not met its statutory responsibility for initiating regulation changes. BMFT has not pursued regulation changes because it has been in a deficit position for over 10 years and has not wanted to further weaken its financial position by incurring the costs associated with changing regulation.

BMFT's financial deficit has gradually decreased. The deficit at the beginning of FY 05 was \$75,400 versus a deficit of \$29,200 at the beginning of FY 09. The deficit has been a continual challenge for the board. The board believes the low number of licenses is the result of the high cost of licensure (\$775).

There were several deficiencies in the administrative support provided to BMFT by staff within the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing. Information contained in the annual reports was often inaccurate and incomplete. Methodologies used to account for BMFT revenues and expenditures were inconsistent and, in some cases, inaccurate. These deficiencies were caused by an unqualified staff member and a lack of written procedures for support functions.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. BMFT should actively pursue regulation changes that are necessary to protect the public interest.
2. The Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing's professional licensing administrative manager should take steps to improve administrative support.
3. The Office of the Governor should make the necessary appointments to keep BMFT at full membership.



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