



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of Commerce, Community,  
and Economic Development

BOARD OF MARITAL AND FAMILY THERAPY

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March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018

The Alaska State Board of Marital and Family Therapy held a teleconference meeting to discuss Senate Bill 105 and House Bill 353 on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The Board unanimously affirmed their support for statutory changes as outlined below.

1. Alaska Statute(AS) 08.63.100(a):
  - a. This amendment **calls for clarification** that the hours required for licensure are 1,700 total hours - 1,500 clinical contact hours and 200 hours of supervision. The supervision hours must include 100 hours of individual supervision and 100 hours of group supervision.
  - b. This amendment further **deletes** the proposed requirement for LMFT's to carry liability insurance. The Board discussed that the intention was to make professional liability insurance available in the case that if an LMFT was under investigation, they would be responsible for those costs individually. Unfortunately, it was discovered that professional liability insurance is not available as desired to offset any investigative costs.
2. AS 08.63.120(b):
  - a. This amendment allows professionals from certain other mental health disciplines to serve as clinical supervisors for group supervision only.
  - b. The amendment further removes Advanced Nurse Practitioners as candidates for clinical supervisors.
3. AS 47.07.030(b)
  - a. The Board fully supports the inclusion of Marital and Family Therapy Services in the list of services available for Medicaid reimbursement.
4. AS 47.07.030(g)
  - a. This amendment defines "direct supervision" and the Board fully supports removing the requirement for a psychiatrist to be on site at least 30% of the time, and replacing it with language defining direct supervision as psychiatric oversight in person or via a communication device.
5. The Board of Marital and Family Therapy supports sections stating that we may adopt regulations in relation to the changes made under this bill. We further support proposed effective dates.

We truly appreciate your continued support of our profession. As members of the Board, we work hard towards making Marital and Family Therapy available to families in need. Marital and Family Therapists are highly trained mental health professionals, specially trained in the dynamics of systems, which allows us to diagnose and treat individuals, couples, and families. Continuing research shows that a strong social connection (the bread and butter of Marital and Family Therapy) leads to a quantifiable decrease in depression and anxiety, increased reported quality of life, greater heart health, increased immune function, and even a longer life span. Again, we thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

The Alaska State Board of Marital and Family Therapy

***Discovery Cove Recovery and Wellness Center, LLC***

**Eagle River / Kodiak**

**11901 Business Blvd. Suite 201**

**Eagle River, AK 99577**

**(907) 694-5550 \* FAX (907) 694-5570**

Re: Senate Bill 105

February 6, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

I urge you to press Senate Bill 105. Without this legislation Marriage and Family Therapists are unable to work with Medicaid patients. These patients need services that we can provide if we are allowed.

Sincerely,



Elsie Kirchner  
LMFT #281

***Discovery Cove Recovery and Wellness Center, LLC***

**Eagle River / Kodiak**

11901 Business Blvd. Suite 201

Eagle River, AK 99577

(907) 694-5550 \* FAX (907) 694-5570

February 6, 2018

Senator Wilson and The Chair & Senate Members of the Labor and Commerce Committee:

I am writing to **strongly urge your support of SB 105.**

The passing of this bill would do a number of things for our community:

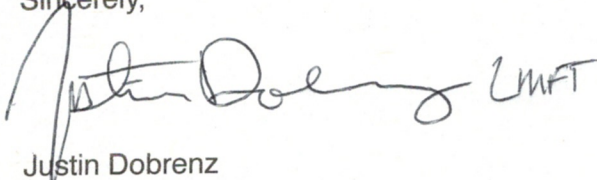
- Increase the number of mental health providers available to Alaskans in need of mental health treatment.
- Increase access to qualified mental health providers who can assist Alaskans with mental health disorders, addiction, and trauma.
- Improve the lives of these community members through treatment, allowing them to find, or return to work.
- And thus, improve commerce within the State of Alaska

As a Mental Health Provider I have experienced the damaging effects of being unable to provide treatment to clients in need due to the out of date laws set up for this state. It pains me to turn away people in need, not because of a lack of my qualifications or a lack of need, but because of a law that restricts access to mental health providers.

As a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist I have received extensive training in family systems, clinical mental health, evidenced based practice, trauma, addiction, and holistic care that qualify me to become a provider towards not only couples, but individuals, children and adolescents, geriatric clients, people using substances and victims of trauma.

**I again urge you to pass SB105 so that my training can be of services to my surrounding community.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Justin Dobrenz", followed by the letters "LMFT" in a similar script.

Justin Dobrenz  
LMFT #128189

4/7/2017

Senate Health and Social Services Committee

REGARDING: SB 105

Dear Senators,

The State of Alaska is greatly deficient of mental health providers. We are actively recruiting more providers from outside of the State to fill the need within the State. Last year, SB 74 was to promote an avenue to recognize physicians, psychiatrists, and mental health providers outside of the State via telemedicine / teletherapy because of our significant need. It was my understanding that SB 74 was to avail all providers in the State; however, I have come to my understand that Marital Family Therapists have been excluded due to lack of Statute recognition in Title 47.

As a psychiatrist in Alaska I refer my patients out to capable mental health providers to avail the psychotherapy needed. I have found that Marital Family Therapists are capable and professional mental health providers to provide the necessary psychotherapy for my patients. I have also found that master's level interventions, such as Marital Family Therapists can intercede, mitigate, and collaborate problematic issues with my patients before they become too intrusive. I believe that the full recognition of Marital Family Therapists in the State will result in effective mental health treatment, early and appropriate psychotherapy intervention, and reduction in crisis intervention (e.g. costly Emergency Room, API, or extensive physician visits).

Since 2009 I have worked with Discovery Cove Counseling out of Kodiak and Eagle River for psychiatric and Opiate Treatment. It has been through the innovative outreach and expertise of a Marital Family Therapist, who is the executive director and a clinician, that multiple patients have been helped and are functioning members of our villages. However, Medicaid patients we are not able to fully implement the Medication Assisted Treatment program that involves psycho-social / psychotherapy. SAMSHA recognizes M.A.T. / Psycho-social - psychotherapy as Best Practice / Evidence Based. I will not take on patients in a partial treatment format, as it is proven to be ineffective. I hear that Discovery Cove has well over 100 such patients on a waiting list, who want treatment but cannot afford nor Alaska Medicaid will currently pay for such treatment. Therefore, I encourage and endorse SB 105 so that all Alaskans may be availed treatment opportunity.

I am pleased to share my thoughts with your committee as necessary.

Sincerely,

*Edward Zeff, M.D.*

Edward Zeff, M.D. DLFAPA

Psychiatrist – Discovery Cove & Norton Sound



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January 16, 2016

At the last meeting of the Board of Marital Family Therapy, the Board unanimously re-approved their recommendation for statutory changes as outlined below.

- 1) the following amendments in bold are to Alaska Statute (AS) 08.63.100(a)(3)(C):
  - (i) practiced marital and family therapy, including 1,500 supervised clinical contact hours of contact with couples, individuals, and families; and
  - (ii) been supervised concurrently during clinical contact for at least 200 hours, including 100 hours of individual supervision and 100 hours of group supervision approved by the board; and
  - (iii) group supervision conducted by State of Alaska licensed supervisor of Marital and Family Therapists, Social Workers, Professional Counselors, Psychologists, Psychiatric A.N.P.s, or Psychiatrists.
- 2) Marital Family Therapist Licensees must have Liability Insurance with a provision for Regulatory Investigation Fees of at least \$30,000.
- 3) Marital Family Therapist Licensees included in Title 47 under AS 47.07.030.

We appreciate your continued support of our profession and ask for your support of these changes, which will benefit the public and strengthen our profession. One of our Board members may be contacting your office to meet and discuss these items with you and be available to answer any questions you may have about them. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

**Leon T Webber** Digitally signed by Leon T Webber  
Date: 2017.01.18 13:44:08 -0800

Leon Webber, LMFT, Board Chair

Alaska Board Marital and Family Therapy