



February 23, 2018

Senator Lyman Hoffman
Co-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
State Capitol Room 532
Juneau AK, 99801

Senator Anna MacKinnon
Co-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
State Capitol Room 532
Juneau AK, 99801

RE: Senate Bill 105

Dear Co-Chairs Hoffman and MacKinnon, Vice Chair Bishop, and members of the Senate Finance Committee:

The American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) thanks you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 105 (SB 105). AAMFT represents the professional interests of over 62,000 Marital and Family Therapists (MFTs) in the United States, including Alaska. The Alaska Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, the state organization for MFTs, is affiliated with AAMFT. AAMFT urges your support for SB 105.

Marital and Family Therapy is a nationally and internationally recognized profession. MFTs are licensed to provide mental health services in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Public and private health plans recognize MFTs as independent providers of mental health services. Marital and Family Therapy is one of the five federally recognized core mental health professions, and MFTs are recognized as eligible providers by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Licensed MFTs must meet a rigorous standard, including the completion of a Master's or Doctoral Degree in marital and family therapy or a related field, supervised clinical experience that includes at least 1,500 hours of direct client contact, and passing an examination.

Allowing the services of licensed MFTs to be included in the state medical assistance program would expand access to qualified mental health providers for the state's most vulnerable. Increasing access to mental health providers may in turn improve health outcomes and reduce health spending on physical health ailments. The services of licensed MFTs are included in the medical assistance program in over 35 states, the majority of which allow direct reimbursement of services provided to beneficiaries.

Thank you for your time and consideration. AAMFT urges your support of SB 105. Please feel free to contact me at levans@aamft.org or via phone at 703-253-0453 if you need additional information or have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Laura Evans
State Government Affairs Manager
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

CC: Senate Finance Committee