



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

**Department of Commerce, Community,  
and Economic Development**

**BOARD OF MARITAL AND FAMILY THERAPY**

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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 Licensures must have Liability Insurance with a provision for Regulatory Investigation Fees of at least \$30,000.
- 3) Marital Family Therapist Licensures 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

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



March 5, 2018

Representative Sam Kito  
Chair, House Labor and Commerce Committee  
State Capitol Room 124  
Juneau AK, 99801

Representative Adam Wool  
Vice Chair, House Labor and Commerce Committee  
State Capitol Room 124  
Juneau AK, 99801

RE: House Bill 353

Dear Chair Kito, Vice Chair Wool, and members of the House Labor and Commerce Committee:

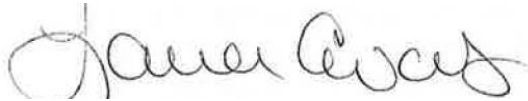
The American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) thanks you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of House Bill 353 (HB 353). AAMFT represents the professional interests of over 62,000 Marital and Family Therapists (MFTs) in the United States, including Alaska. The Alaska Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, the state organization for MFTs, is affiliated with AAMFT. AAMFT urges your support for HB 353.

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](mailto:levans@aamft.org) or via phone at 703-253-0453 if you need additional information or have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Laura Evans".

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

CC: House Labor and Commerce Committee

**From:** Mercy Dennis  
**To:** [Rep. Sam Kito](#); [Rep. Adam Wool](#); [epresentative.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov](mailto:epresentative.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov); [Rep. Louise Stutes](#); [Rep. Chris Birch](#); [Rep. Gary Knopp](#); [Rep. Colleen Sullivan-Leonard](#); [Rep. Mike Chenault](#); [Ashley Winslow, MFT](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#)  
**Subject:** HB 353  
**Date:** Friday, March 23, 2018 1:18:08 PM

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Dear Members of the House Labor and Commerce Committee,

As a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) in the state of Alaska I ask that you support House Bill 353 regarding Marital and Family Therapy Licensing and Services. These changes in the licensing statutes will enable consumers to access mental health services that previously have not been available to them. The mental health consumers it will serve are frequently the most underserved population in our community.

Also, in bill 353, the requested changes will provide applicants for the LMFT license to broaden their ability to meet their required supervision hours by being able to except group supervision hours from other licensed mental health professionals. This is particularly important to Marriage and Family Therapy Associates (MFT-A) who are working in mental health agencies as they complete their licensing requirements. These professionals are very valued employees for these agencies in our community and this statute change will encourage MFT-As to work in these agencies. This is a benefit to the agencies, the MFT-As and the consumers of mental health services.

Thank You for your consideration of Bill 353.

Mercy Dennis LMFT

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