

ALABAMA BOARD OF EXAMINERS IN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY

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MINUTES Board Meeting January 24, 2020

The Alabama Board of Examiners in Marriage and Family Therapy met on Friday, January 24, 2020 at the Board's office in Montgomery to conduct Board business. Members present were Dr. Luciana Silva (Board Chair), Mr. Douglas Cooke (Vice Chair), Dr. Mark Westfall (member) and Ms. Raven Pyle (new member). Member absent was Dr. Karley Downs (new member pending oath). Also present were Ms. Hope Childers (Board Administrator), Ms. Bettie Carmack (Board Legal Counsel), Ms. Renee' Reames (recording secretary), Ms. Jennifer Love (Legal Assistant) and Mr. Mike Weeks (Legislative Affairs).

The regularly scheduled meeting was advertised on the Board's website, www.mft.alabama.gov, and the Secretary of State's website, www.sos.alabama.gov, in accordance with the Alabama Open Meetings Act.

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Silva, Board Chair, at 10:00 a.m.

Ms. Jennifer Love, Notary Public At Large, administered the oath of office to new Board member, Ms. Raven Pyle.

Ms. Reames called Board roll and a quorum of the members was present to conduct business.

Chairperson Silva presented the meeting agenda for the Board's review and approval. Chairperson Silva requested that Medicaid be added as new business. Mr. Cooke made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Dr. Westfall and unanimously approved by the Board.

Chairperson Silva presented the October 25, 2019 Board meeting minutes for the Board's approval. Dr. Westfall made a motion to approve the October meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cooke and unanimously approved by the Board.

Ms. Reames presented the Executive Director's Report and reviewed the financial activities of the Board for the period ending December 31, 2019. The financial report also included a line item summary of expenses. She reported on the total number of licensees (#396 total), along with the total number of complaints received during FY 2019 and FY 2020 (copy of the report available for review in Official Book of Minutes). The Board requested a report, for the next Board meeting, on the number of licensees over a 10-year comparison for all categories. Mr. Cooke made the motion to approve the financial report as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Westfall and unanimously approved by the Board.

Ms. Childers presented the Administrator's Report listing activities performed by the staff since the last Board meeting, along with a list of new licenses issued (reports available for review in Official Book of Minutes). She explained that the Board's website has a search licensee component which can be filtered for specific information.

The Board discussed the collective decision-making process of the Board. Ms. Carmack cautioned the members about individually representing the Board on matters that require the full Board's consideration.

Ms. Carmack indicated that she had no new business to discuss with the Board for the Legal Counsel Report.

The Board continued discussions about modifications to the rules, in consideration of the comments about the scope of practice of MFT, received earlier from the Alabama Medical Association. Chairperson Silva indicated that she would submit a draft of the amended rules for the Board's consideration at the next Board meeting.

Chairperson Silva presented proposed changes to Rule 536-X-6-.01 Required Relevant Professional and Continuing Education Experience. She explained that the intent of amending the rule was to broaden CE opportunities and she commented on proposed changes to include CE activities sponsored by allied mental health professional associations or agencies (i.e., psychology, counseling, nursing, medical, social work, etc.), as well as sponsorship by mental health federal agencies (e.g., DOD and DOE) and removing reference to the state association since it is no longer approving CE programs. The Board further discussed modifications to Rule item (4)(b)6. Dr. Westfall made the motion that item (4)(b)6. read continuing education activities related to mental health, counseling, and/or marriage and family therapy sponsored by colleges and universities that are regionally accredited. The motion was seconded by Ms. Pyle and unanimously approved by the Board.

Dr. Westfall made the motion to approve the amended Rule 536-X-6-.01 Required Relevant Professional and Continuing Education Experience, with the approved changes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Pyle and unanimously approved by the Board.

Chairperson Silva presented proposed changes to Rule 536-X-2-.03 Endorsement of an Individual who is Licensed/Registered as an MFT under the Laws of another State or Territory of the United States or of a Foreign Country. The Board discussed the new item (5) which stated that licensed MFT's from any of the other 49 states of the United States are automatically eligible for an Alabama licensure by endorsement following the verification of moral character, evidence of licensure, certification of no disciplinary actions, and verification of three credit semester or four credit quarter course in mental health diagnosis. Also proposed was the change to item (1) under Notes, regarding licensed non-resident's limited services in Alabama. Dr. Westfall made a motion to approve the amended Rule as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Pyle and unanimously approved by the Board.

The Board reviewed an email inquiry regarding supervision hours specific to Rule 536-X-2-.02(7). The Board members discussed their efforts to increase the number of licensed supervisors. The Board agreed with the current Rule regarding client direct hours and concurrent ratio of supervised hours and made no changes to the Rule. Ms. Childers indicated that she would communicate to the licensee about the Board's decision.

Chairperson Silva presented information concerning Medicaid not allowing LMFT's to sign-off/approve Medicaid patient's treatment plans, at the same authority level as an LPC has been given through Medicaid reimbursement guidelines. After discussion of the similarities and differences in the two licensing professions, the Board also discussed the best approach in notifying Medicaid of the LMFT services. Mr. Cooke made a motion to authorize the Board Chair to draft a letter to Medicaid to inquire about their official position on the matter of LMFT authorizing treatment plans as compared to LPC authority. The motion was seconded by Dr. Westfall and unanimously approved by the Board. The

Board agreed that a draft of the letter would be sent to the Board's Legal Counsel for review and distribution to other members for additional comments.

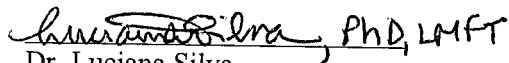
Chairperson Silva reminded the members about the upcoming Board member training sponsored by the Department of Examiners of Public Accounts. Four members indicated that they were scheduled to attend.

Ms. Childers represented six applications for the Board's review. Mr. Cooke made a motion to approve four (4) applications for licensure, along with two (2) applications pending receipt of additional information. The motion was seconded by Dr. Westfall and unanimously approved by the Board.

Chairperson Silva announced that the next meeting of the Board was scheduled for Friday, April 24, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.

With no further business to discuss and Chairperson Silva adjourned the meeting at 12:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Dr. Luciana Silva
Board Chair

Keith E. Warren
Executive Director

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