

**BOARD OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY EXAMINERS  
PUBLIC SESSION MINUTES  
MAY 14, 2009**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 9:21 a.m. by Board Chair, James Verser who read the notice of compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Present:

Board Member, Ben Beitin  
Board Member, Dawn Lacy  
Board Member, Amy E. Meckeler  
Board Member, Judith Owens Board Member, Edward Reading  
Board Member, James Verser  
Board Member, Ronald K. Walthall

Excused:

Board Member, Gina Kassel  
Board Member, J. Barry Mascari

Staff Present:

Deputy Attorney General, Jodi C. Krugman  
Administrative Staff, Elaine L. DeMars  
Administrative Staff, Celeste Paige  
Administrative Staff, Aishah Figueroa

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

On a motion made by Judith Owens, seconded by Ronald Walthall the Public Session Minutes of the April 16, 2009 meeting were approved as amended.

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Attending the meeting:

John Koehler, Senior Governmental Affairs Agent, Riker Danzig  
Geraldine Kerr, LMFT, Legislative Chair, NJAMFT  
Dr. Muriel Singer, LMFT, Kean University; NJAMFT Chair  
Dr. Robert Massey, LMFT, Seton Hall University  
Dr. Charleen Alderfer, LMFT, The College of New Jersey  
Tarcilia Sutterly, LMFT, NJAMFT  
Jaime Gilmore, NJAMFT  
Frederique Bergondo, NJAMFT

**V. NJAMFT/AMFTRB Matters**

A. The above listed individuals, representing the professional association, New Jersey Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, and the respective educational institutions attended to address issues relating to the number of New Jersey licensed marriage and family therapists, the requirements for licensure

and the difficulty in obtaining qualified supervisors. John Kohler provided an overview of the issues involved with the declining number of licensees and professional association membership. He portrayed the Board of Marriage and Family Therapy Examiners as multifunctional in that it exists to ensure the ongoing existence and growth of the profession and at the same time, provide for public protection through enforcement of the statute and regulations.

Gerri Kerr stated that she viewed today's meeting as the beginning of a collaborative dialogue to identify and eliminate the "gaps" and create systems to support students through the licensing process. She stated that the examination for licensure can be a "lonely and impossible" step in the licensure process since it is separated from the educational process.

Maria Seddio reported that the goal of the NJAMFT is to increase the quality of services to be delivered and affect change through the sharing of information, identifying and understanding the "glitches" and to foster communication between the educational community, the Board and NJAMFT. There is a focus on creating support for members who have completed the educational requirements for licensure. She outlined national and state-wide efforts to advance the profession.

Dr. Singer stated that the university training for marriage and family students is superb, however students are faced with a challenge in arranging for supervision to meet the licensure requirement. She gave an example of a student who took more than two years to make arrangements and then had to pay \$150 per hour for the private supervision. Dr. Singer reported that in her research, she found that the majority of states allow graduate students to take the examination closer to the education experience to allow teaching to be fresh in their minds.

Dr. Massey provided a historical perspective on the profession and the relationship with the Board. "He stated that in the past there has been a lack of Board cooperation," the current Board has demonstrated "reasonableness." Dr. Massey pointed out that the missing element is a network of support for graduates. There is negative competition among LCSWs and LMFTs. The majority of licensees, he suggests, are in private practice, with a few in agencies and schools. Schools, parents, teachers and administrators need to collaborate and welcome LMFTs. There is a need for increased recognition by state agencies for work opportunities and reimbursement.

Dr. Massey suggested that the reduction in the supervised experience hours was a big boost and if students were able to sit for the examination after graduation, it would be another motivation to the students to integrate into the professional community.

Dr. Alderfer outlined her concerns with the supervision requirements and the way in which the hours can be completed and the prohibitive costs involved.

Board Chair, James Verser explained that the involvement of the Board is restricted by the provisions of the statute, regulations and department regulations. The statute, at N.J.S.A. 45:8B-18 requires that in order to sit for the examination, the applicant must provide documentation that he has met the educational and experiential qualifications . . ." The test is designed to be taken after the two years of supervised marriage and family therapy experience. Mr. Verser highlighted the Three-Year Temporary Permit as the first level of licensure, allowing qualifying graduates to complete the supervision hours in private as well as non-profit settings with an approved supervisor. Permit holders are considered to be a license category and are equivalent to the licensed associate counselor, licensed social worker, etc.

Judy Owens explained that the supervision requirements provide that one-half of the hours can be in group supervision and that individual supervision may include a maximum of 2 supervisees.

Maria Seddio summarized in reporting that the association, through its "Lifeline Campaign" is working to address the gap students experience after graduation by encouraging association members to provide supervision for qualified candidates. She also reported that the association has initiated an associate member effort to integrate graduates entering the field. NJAMFT is also working on frequently asked questions for

their Web page.

Dr. Beitin noted that the definition of 'qualified supervisor' at N.J.A.C. 13:34-4.3 allows for supervision by (1) New Jersey licensed marriage a family therapist or (2) license eligible: MSW or related degree with requisite course work plus training and professional experience. There was agreement that the 3-Year Temporary Permit should be promoted within the educational institutions. The programs could also assist students in gaining an understanding of the different types of practice settings/agencies. The permit would allow graduates to work in both agency and private practice settings.

John Kohler reported that he had conducted a search of the Civil Service Commission's job titles and job descriptions. "He found no titles that support marriage and family therapy." Professional Counselors and Social Workers are mentioned. He suggested that the Civil Service Commission be approached to provide parity for marriage and family therapists. In response, Elaine DeMars reported that a letter has been sent to the Department of Personnel regarding the matter. The classification manager acknowledged receipt of the request and the limited resources would delay review of the matter.

Mr. Kohler advised that he and association representatives would work on a plan of action for the Board's review and input.

## VI. LEGISLATIVE/REGULATORY

N.J.A.C. 13:34-1 et seq.

The public comment period for Rule Proposal, Proposed Re-adoption/Amendments will end on July 3.

## VII. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

A. Elaine DeMars reported that continuing education audit letters are being mailed to a random sampling of licensees. Two (volunteer) summer interns will assist in processing and tracking responses.

### B. Professional Examination Service

Notice was made that pursuant to the AMFTRB contract for the MFT examination, state boards are responsible for payment of special accommodation fees.

## VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

### A. Regs Committee

Ronald Walthall reported that with revisions, the form required by the Board of Psychological Examiners can be adopted to determine the tax status of bona fide community agencies pursuant to N.J.A.C. 13:34-3.2. The revisions will be incorporated and the form will be made available upon request..

### B. Professional Counselors Committee

Elaine DeMars reported that the Committee continues to work with graduate programs to evaluate programs and course work.

### C. Alcohol and Drug Counselors Committee

Dr. Edward Reading reported that the regulations, N.J.A.C. 13:34C-1 et seq. are in the sunset review process.

## IX. NEW BUSINESS

Ronald Walthall announced his resignation from Board member service effective July 17, 2009.

## X. NEXT MEETING

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will be held June 11, 2009 at 9:00 a.m., Hudson Conference Room, 124 Halsey Street, Newark, New Jersey.

## XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion Edward Reading seconded by Amy Meckler, the Board moved to Executive Session at 9:26 a.m. to discuss pending complaints and confidential matters. The Board returned to public session at 11:30 a.m.

## XII. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Ed Reading, seconded by Ben Beitin, the meeting adjourned at 2:08 p.m.