

**BOARD OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY EXAMINERS
PUBLIC SESSION MINUTES
DECEMBER 8, 2005**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:25 a.m. by Acting Board Chair James Verser who read the notice of compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

II. ROLL CALL

Present:

Board Member, James Verser
Board Member, Ben K. Beitin
Board Member, Samira Haddad
Board Member, Gina Kassel
Board Member, Judith A. Owens
Board Member, Edward Reading
Board Member, Ronald K. Walthall

Excused:

Board Member, Barbara Andrews
Board Member, Dawn M. Lacy
Board Member, Amy E. Meckeler

Staff Present:

Executive Director, Elaine L. DeMars
Deputy Attorney General, Mileidy Perez
Administrative Staff, Celeste Sweeper
Administrative Staff, Aishah Figueroa

III. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. On behalf of the Board, Executive Director, Elaine DeMars welcomed newly appointed Board members Ben Beitin, LMFT, Gina Kassell, LMFT and Judith Owens, LMFT and offered congratulations to each on their appointment as members of the Board.

B. Election of Officers

Ms. DeMars informed the Board members that in order to conduct Board business, the first order of business is to elect from among the members a Chair for the day to conduct the agenda.

On a motion made by Ronald Walthall , seconded by Samira Haddad and unanimous vote, James Verser was elected to serve as the temporary Chair.

Nominations for the office of Chair were opened and on a motion made by Ronald Walthall, seconded by Edward Reading, James Verser was elected Board Chair by unanimous vote to fill the unexpired term.

On a motion made by Edward Reading, seconded by Ronald Walthall, Public Member Samira Haddad will serve as Board Secretary by unanimous vote to fill the unexpired term.

The Board acknowledged the commitment and dedicated service of Florence Schatten, former Board Chair

and her efforts on behalf of the consumers of New Jersey. The service of Public Member and former Board Secretary, Roland Alum, was also noted. The Board also acknowledged the exemplary service of Dr. Stroh, his representation of the Professional Counselors Examiners Committee and his advocacy for the interest of the public. His wealth of knowledge of the counseling fields and the requisite educational programs has provided a valuable resource for the Board and Committee.

C. Biennial License Renewal

Ms. DeMars informed the Board that preparations for the mailing of the 2006 license renewal application are underway. A copy of the draft renewal form was reviewed. The Board was advised that the 2006 renewal will ask the licensee to certify that he or she has satisfied the continuing education requirement. Licensees will have the option of renewing online with a credit card. Instructions for the on-line renewal will be mailed to all active licensees approximately eight weeks prior to the license expiration date. The traditional pressure-sealed (hard copy) renewal application form will be mailed to all active licensees six weeks prior to the expiration date.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion made by Ronald Walthall, seconded by Edward Reading, and unanimous vote the Public Session Minutes of the July 14, 2005, meeting were approved as amended. On a motion made by Edward Reading, seconded by Ronald Walthall, and unanimous vote the Public Session Minutes of the September 8, 2005, meeting were approved as amended. On a motion by Ronald Walthall, seconded by Samira Haddad, and unanimous vote the Public Session Minutes of the November 17, 2005, meeting were approved as amended.

V. LEGISLATIVE/REGULATORY

A. Public Law 2005, Chapter 49

Board Chair James Verser and Regulatory Analyst Danielle Swenson provided an explanation of Public Law 2005, Chapter 49 and the regulatory process underway to revise N.J.A.C. 13:34 - 1 et seq. to be consistent with the provisions of the new law. Ronald Walthall accepted the appointment of Mr. Verser to chair a regulatory review committee to complete work on the draft regulations and to recommend future regulatory initiatives.

B. New Jersey Professional Responsibility and Reporting Enhancement Act P.L. 2005, c. 83

Deputy Attorney General Mileidy Perez explained the background and provisions of the statute which went into effect on October 31, 2005. The law applies to licensees of the State Board of Marriage and Family Therapy Examiners and other professionals licensed by the professional boards of New Jersey. Specifically, the statute requires health care entities to promptly report to the Division negative action taken against a health care professional by the entities based on professional impairment, incompetency or professional misconduct relating adversely to patient care and safety. Such negative action includes the reduction, revocation or suspension of privileges, removal of the professional from the list of eligible employees, or the discharge or termination of the professional services. The health care entities must also report to the Division if a health care professional resigns or gives up privileges in order to avoid an investigation or action, fails to comply with a request to seek assistance in matters of impairment, or is a party to a medical malpractice liability suit in which there is a settlement, judgement or award. Under the new law, health care professionals now have a responsibility to file reports with respect to other health care professionals, not just licensees of their own board, if they are in possession of information which reasonably indicates that another has demonstrated an impairment, gross incompetence or unprofessional conduct which would present imminent danger to a patient or the public.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

Ulrich Columbus, STM, D.Min, Executive Director, The Family Counseling Center The Board reviewed the letter dated November 16, 2005, requesting the approval of a post doctoral study/reading group for continuing education credit. The Board directed that a response be provided informing Dr. Columbus that the group he attends does not appear to meet the requirements of N.J.A.C. 13:34-8.1. Dr. Columbus will be advised to submit his request to one of the approved providers listed under N.J.A.C. 13:34-8.3(a)1. In accordance with N.J.A.C. 13:34-8.3(b)

VII. NEXT MEETING

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will be held January 12, 2006 at 9:00 a.m., 124 Halsey Street, Newark, New Jersey.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion by Samira Haddad, seconded by Edward Reading the Board moved to Executive Session at 11:00 a.m. to discuss confidential matters.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine L. DeMars
Executive Director