

# ALABAMA BOARD OF EXAMINERS IN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY

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## MINUTES Board Meeting Emergency Meeting March 27, 2020

The Alabama Board of Examiners in Marriage and Family Therapy met on Friday, March 27, 2020 from the Board's office in Montgomery, with each member attending virtually, to conduct emergency Board business during the COVID 19 State of Emergency. Members present via conference call were Dr. Luciana Silva (Board Chair), Mr. Douglas Cooke (Vice Chair), Dr. Mark Westfall (member), Ms. Raven Pyle (member) and Dr. Karly Downs (new member). Also present were Mr. Keith Warren (Executive Director), Ms. Hope Childers (Board Administrator), Ms. Bettie Carmack (Board Legal Counsel), Ms. Renee' Reames (recording secretary) and public guests.

The emergency meeting was advertised on the Board's website, [www.mft.alabama.gov](http://www.mft.alabama.gov), and the Secretary of State's website, [www.sos.alabama.gov](http://www.sos.alabama.gov), in accordance with the Alabama Open Meetings Act.

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Silva, Board Chair, at 10:05 a.m.

Mr. Keith Warren administered the oath of office to new Board member, Dr. Karley Downs.

Mr. Warren called Board roll and all members were present to conduct business. Mr. Warren stated the purpose of the meeting was to discuss proposed rule changes that may be necessary under the COVID 19 State of Emergency.

Chairperson Silva indicated that the Board had received numerous requests to lift both the teletherapy and telesupervision training requirements (Rule 536-X-8-.09). The Board discussed relaxing the minimum requirements until the state of emergency was lifted. It was the consensus of the Board that a minimum number of hours of teletherapy training was important prior to proceeding with offering teletherapy to clients. The Board strongly advised licensees against selecting non-HIPPA compliant technology platforms when providing teletherapy services and encouraged licensees to make all efforts to protect personal and client confidentiality in the use of technology-based platforms.

Dr. Downs made the motion to allow licensee, during the state of emergency, to provide teletherapy and supervision prior to completing the full training requirements, while abiding by HIPPA guidelines, and to simultaneously pursue the required training hours. The motion was seconded by Ms. Pyle and unanimously approved by the Board.

The Board agreed that licensees providing teletherapy and telesupervision should show evidence of continuing to complete training that would count toward the current training requirements. The Board further agreed that should the licensee wish to continue providing telehealth services beyond the lifting of the state of emergency, the licensee would be expected to have the required training as outlined in the current Rules, or cease to provide telehealth services until full training was obtained.

The Board agreed to relax the definition of direct contact hours for interns with supervisors due to the COVID 19 conditions and state of emergency.

The Board discussed providing a list of teletherapy training resources for licensees and to post the information on the Board's website. Dr. Silva asked the members to submit training resource information to her. She stated that recommendations from the Board about abiding by HIPPA guidelines and safeguards regarding technology platforms would also be included in the web-post.

The Board continued to discuss CE requirements (Rule 536-X-6-.01) and consideration to distant-learning due to COVID 19 conditions affecting the upcoming renewal cycle. The Board discussed that the initial 15 hours of teletherapy training (plus the additional hours of telesupervision training) may be used toward the continuing education requirements for bi-annual license renewal, if the teletherapy training was from an acceptable source in accordance with the Board's CE rule 536-X-6-.01, although teletherapy/telesupervision training does not need to grant CEs in order to be counted as due training in this service modality, as long as training content abides by rules outlined in Ala. Admin. Code r. 536-X-8-.09. Ms. Pyle made the motion to allow licensees, effective March 2020 through March 2021, to obtain all continuing education credit online. The motion was seconded by Dr. Westfall and unanimously approved by the Board.

Chairperson Silva acknowledged Ms. Keiko Davenport with AAMFT and Mr. Roger Smith with AAMFT, who were on the conference call. Both Ms. Davenport and Mr. Smith indicated that concerns for licensure and treatment guidelines by its members had been addressed by the Board by relaxing requirements during the COVID 19 state of emergency. They indicated that they had no further matters to address with the Board.

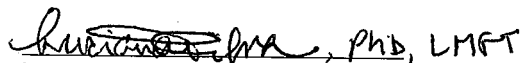
Mr. Warren reminded the members that the next regular meeting of the Board was scheduled for Friday, April 24, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. He indicated that he would keep the Board advised about conducting the regular meeting of the Board through teleconferencing.

Chairperson Silva polled the members about meeting on July 17<sup>th</sup> rather than July 24<sup>th</sup>, due to a conflict in scheduling. It was the consensus of the members to move the meeting to July 17, 2020.

Chairperson Silva reported that the training hours currently required in Rule 536-X-8-.09 would be discussed at the next meeting.

With no further business to discuss and Chairperson Silva adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Dr. Luciana Silva, Board Chair

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Keith E. Warren, Executive Director

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