



Board of Behavioral Sciences



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Gavin Newsom, Governor  
State of California

Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency  
Department of Consumer Affairs

## OUTREACH AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

A recorded webcast of this meeting is available at <https://youtu.be/lGet3nfTi4Y>.

**DATE** February 7, 2025

**TIME** 1:00 p.m.

### LOCATIONS

**Primary Location** Department of Consumer Affairs  
1747 N. Market Blvd., #186  
Sacramento, CA 95834

**Alternative Platform** WebEx Video/Phone Conference

### ATTENDEES

#### Members Present at Remote Locations

Dr. Annette Walker, Chair, Public Member  
Dr. Nicolas Boyd, LPCC Member  
Susan Friedman, Public Member  
John Sovec, LMFT Member

#### Staff Present at Primary Location

Steve Sodergren, Executive Officer  
Marlon McManus, Assistant Executive Officer  
Syreeta Risso, Special Projects and Research Analyst  
Sabina Knight, Legal Counsel

#### Staff Present at Remote Locations

Christina Kitamura, Administrative Analyst  
Christy Berger, Regulatory Manager

**Other Attendees** Public participation via WebEx video conference/phone conference  
and in-person at Department of Consumer Affairs

1 **1. Call to Order and Establishment of Quorum**

2  
3 Dr. Annette Walker, Chair of the Outreach and Education Committee  
4 (Committee), called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. Roll was called, and a  
5 quorum was established.  
6

7 **2. Introductions**

8  
9 Committee members introduced themselves during role call; staff and public  
10 attendees introduced themselves.  
11

12 **3. Overview of the Purpose of the Outreach and Education Committee**

13  
14 The purpose of this committee is to review the Board's outreach efforts and  
15 provide recommendations for future efforts that will support the Goal 6  
16 established by the Strategic Plan.  
17

18 The Committee is tasked with:

- 19
  - Enhancing educational resources for licensees and consumers.
  - Expanding outreach efforts to connect with more diverse populations.
  - Strengthening engagement with schools, training programs, and with consumers at public events.
  - Encouraging broader stakeholder participation in Board meetings.  
24

25 Discussion

26 Friedman: Recommended that board members consider visiting educational  
27 institutions to engage with students regarding the need for mental health  
28 therapists. Additionally, members may consider outreach to faith-based  
29 organizations.  
30

31 Sovec:

- 32
  - Suggested that further discussion—both among members and with public participants representing various organizations—could help clarify the meaning and implications of the broader goals.
  - Referred to the topic of enhancing educational resources for licensees and consumers and to existing tools and initiatives developed in recent years. Questioned whether these efforts would be expanded.
  - Suggested that the group translate the grand goals into specific priorities and focus, evaluating current resources and determining how to build upon that.  
41

42 Boyd:

- 43
  - Agreed with the need to further define the broad goals and determine how their impact will be measured. It was noted that without clear metrics, it is  
44

difficult to assess effectiveness, particularly in outreach and education efforts.

- Asked if the Board has a role in advocating and funding resources for training if the goal is to increase the number of providers in the state.

Walker: Expressed interest in understanding existing budgets, staffing capacity, and current outreach and education efforts before setting new goals. Suggested that assessing available resources and constraints is essential to establishing a clear starting point.

Sovec: Suggested that the committee clearly identify its target audiences for outreach and education efforts. Recognizing that there may be multiple audiences, the importance of developing specific, scalable and repeatable resources tailored to each group was emphasized.

Sodergren: Noted that additional staff have recently been assigned to outreach efforts, and the program is being reorganized. While there are many ideas, the focus remains on effective implementation. The committee is expected to help establish clear guidelines, with future meetings aimed at reviewing concrete tasks and initiatives.

Sovec:

- Which audiences have already been targeted through outreach efforts?
- Which key groups may have been overlooked and should be prioritized moving forward?

Sodergren:

- The primary outreach audiences are licensees and applicants, with a focus on helping them understand application processes and legal requirements. Consumer education remains an area needing improvement and is a priority for future efforts.
- Outreach to schools has also been ongoing, particularly around laws and ethics.
- Expanding outreach to high school and undergraduate students was identified as a potential goal, though it may require additional staffing and resources.

#### Public Comment

Shanti Ezrine, California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (CAMFT): Encouraged the committee to consider organizations such as CAMFT and other professional associations as valuable partners and resources. These groups could support messaging, outreach, implementation, and engagement efforts stemming from future committee meetings.

#### 4. Overview of the Board's Current Outreach Efforts

The Board employs several methods to provide outreach and education to its licensees and the public:

- Website

Staff is reviewing the Board's website to improve accessibility and make information easier to find and navigate.

- Social Media

Since expanding its social media outreach in 2020, the Board has seen significant growth. Posts cover topics such as processing times, meeting alerts, and mental health initiatives. Active engagement, including responses to comments and live events, has contributed to this success. The Board is working to reinstate live events to address common questions and clarify the licensure process.

- Outreach Events

The Board continues to host webinars and informational sessions for students upon request and participates in stakeholder meetings and professional conferences. Outreach efforts are expanding, with a new outreach coordinator and a dedicated email inbox established to streamline event requests and communication with institutions.

- BBS Newsletter

The Board publishes at least three newsletters annually, providing updates on regulations, legislation, licensing tips, best practices, and disciplinary actions. Newsletters are emailed to licensees and posted online.

- Subscriber List

The Board maintains a subscriber list for individuals to receive updates on regulations, licensing, meetings, and other news. Staff is exploring ways to enhance the list's effectiveness in engaging stakeholders.

- Publications

The Board offers publications on licensing, consumer safety, and education, available on its website. Key materials include multilingual consumer guides, applicant handbooks, and telehealth best practice documents for providers and consumers

#### Discussion

Friedman: Suggested holding open Zoom forums twice a year, allowing licensees to ask questions directly to board staff. These sessions could be

1 promoted through license renewal notices, text messages, or other  
2 communication channels.

3  
4 Boyd:

- 5 • Suggested automatic enrollment of licensees and registrants (through the  
6 renewal process) and applicants on the list serve.
- 7 • Suggested creating informational YouTube videos
- 8 • Suggested hosting professional associations once or twice a year for open  
9 forum discussions
- 10 • Suggested hosting universities once or twice a year for open forum  
11 discussions.

12  
13 Sodergren: The Board has already produced 13 different videos. Staff will  
14 investigate the auto enrollment on the list serve and if an opt-out feature is  
15 available on Breeze.

16  
17 Sovec:

- 18 • Suggested developing post-event surveys.
- 19 • Suggested exploring options for delivering the Board's newsletter as an  
20 open document in the body of the email, rather than as a link.
- 21 • Suggested incorporating in-person engagement opportunities, as all  
22 current outreach events are virtual.

23  
24 Friedman: Recommended using text messaging as a form of notification.

#### 25 26 Public Comment

27 S. Ezrine, CAMFT: Thanked Dr. Boyd for mentioning how the professional  
28 associations can be involved, and CAMFT is open to exploring those ideas.

### 29 30 **5. Discussion and Possible Recommendation Regarding the Committee's** 31 **Strategic Objectives**

32  
33 The Board's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan lists the following objectives for the Goal  
34 6: Outreach and Education:

35  
36 **Objective 6.1:** Create a more responsive and robust consumer and licensing  
37 education program through videos, social media campaigns, and electronic  
38 publications to ensure understanding of new changes in laws and regulations.

39  
40 **Objective 6.2:** Collaborate with entities that work with consumers to increase  
41 equitable and inclusive outreach to diverse populations.  
42

1 **Objective 6.3:** Increase and diversify Board engagement with schools, training  
2 programs, public events, and relevant professional organizations to raise  
3 awareness of the Board's role and activities.  
4

5 **Objective 6.4:** Identify and implement strategies to gain increased participation  
6 in Board meetings from a wider group of stakeholders.  
7

8 **Objective 6.5:** Increase awareness of the profession by using outreach to build  
9 relationships with underserved communities and diversify the workforce.  
10

#### 11 Discussion

12 Sovec: Regarding Goal 6.5, what actions has the Board taken so far and what is  
13 in the planning stages?  
14

15 Sodergren: Responded that the Board has not pursued anything in that goal yet.  
16

17 Sovec: Expressed concern that this goal has not been addressed.  
18

19 Sodergren: Lack of resources has prevented the Board from expanding this  
20 item. This goal would require in-person outreach, which will require travel, and  
21 travel is currently restricted.  
22

23 Friedman: Questioned the Board's message to consumers and what key  
24 information is being communicated?  
25

26 Sodergren: The message is the importance of consumer education, noting that  
27 current publications help individuals understand how to find a therapist, what to  
28 expect from services, and how to report concerns. Consumer education supports  
29 both access to care and enforcement efforts by informing the public of their rights  
30 and encouraging reporting of unethical conduct.  
31

32 Boyd: Suggested exploring partnership opportunities with the HCAI, which offers  
33 grants to support outreach and workforce diversification efforts. This could align  
34 with the Board's strategic goals and workforce development initiatives.  
35

#### 36 Public Comment

37 Shanti Ezrine, CAMFT: Appreciation was expressed for the inclusion of  
38 language promoting inclusivity, equity, and diversity in the strategic objectives.  
39 CAMFT offers its services to the Board to assist in achieving these goals.  
40

41 Dr. Ben Caldwell: Emphasized the importance of evaluating whether future  
42 consumer outreach efforts would duplicate existing county or state mental health  
43 efforts or provide added value.  
44

45 Elyse Springer, Postpartum Support International-California: Suggested  
46 increasing public awareness of workgroup meetings, such as those related to AB

1 2581, by promoting them through social media. This could help encourage  
2 broader participation and more diverse public comment.  
3

4 No action taken.  
5

#### 6 **6. Suggestions for Future Agenda items** 7

8 Friedman: Suggested an agenda item to consider providing information to all  
9 incoming college freshmen in California about the state's mental health needs,  
10 the demand for therapists, and available scholarships through programs like  
11 HCAI. It was proposed that the committee decide on this at the next meeting.  
12

#### 13 **7. Public Comment for Items not on the Agenda** 14

15 Sovec: Made a request to use the full terms "diversity, equity, inclusion, and  
16 accessibility" instead of the acronym DEI, to better reflect the values and intent of  
17 the committee's work and avoid negative associations with the acronym.  
18

#### 19 **8. Adjournment** 20

21 The Committee adjourned at 2:41 p.m.