



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. Call to Order and Establishment of Quorum

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

2. Introductions

Committee members introduced themselves during role call; staff and public attendees introduced themselves.

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

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

The Committee is tasked with:

- 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.

Discussion

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

Sovec:

- 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.

Boyd:

- 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

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

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

Boyd:

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

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

Sovec:

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

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

Public Comment

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

5. Discussion and Possible Recommendation Regarding the Committee's Strategic Objectives

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

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

Objective 6.2: Collaborate with entities that work with consumers to increase equitable and inclusive outreach to diverse populations.

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

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

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

Discussion

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Public Comment

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

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

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

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

No action taken.

6. Suggestions for Future Agenda items

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

7. Public Comment for Items not on the Agenda

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

8. Adjournment

The Committee adjourned at 2:41 p.m.