



C A L I F O R N I A

BOARD OF BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022–2026

ADOPTED: SOLID PLANNING

STATE OF CALIFORNIA



DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

SOLID TRAINING AND
PLANNING SOLUTIONS



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MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Massimiliano “Max” Disposti, *Public Member—Chair*

Crystal Anthony, *LCSW Member*

Ross Erlich, *Public Member*

Susan Friedman, *Public Member*

Diana Herweck, *LPCC Member*

Justin Huft, *LMFT Member*

Christopher C. Jones, *LEP Member*

Abigail Ortega, *LCSW Member*

Kelly Ranasinghe, *Public Member*

John Sovec, *LMFT Member*

Wendy Strack, *Public Member*

Annette Walker, *Public Member*

Yvette Casares Willis, *Public Member*

Gavin Newsom, Governor

Lourdes M. Castro Ramírez, Secretary, Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency

Kimberly Kirchmeyer, Director, Department of Consumer Affairs

Steve Sodergren, Executive Officer, Board of Behavioral Sciences

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

As president of the California Board of Behavioral Sciences, it is my honor to introduce the *2022–26 Strategic Plan* and to express my greatest appreciation for the work and contribution of the board members, staff, and stakeholders in developing this plan that will assist in guiding the Board during the next four years.

Events of the last few years have brought into clearer focus some of the challenges and opportunities the Board will need to consider when working toward ensuring the highest quality mental health for all Californians. The increased use of telehealth, spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic, has made it necessary to review current Board statutes and regulations to ensure consumer safety. Social unrest across California and the country has highlighted the need to ensure the Board is being equitable and inclusive in all its decision and policies. Additionally, the Board will need to explore ways in which to support the development of a culturally responsive mental health workforce that will be able to meet the increasing needs of Californians.

The *2022–26 Strategic Plan* emphasizes reducing unnecessary barriers to licensure, supporting a culturally responsive workforce, increasing access through technology, and Board accountability. The ongoing effort to create an environment that is efficient, streamlined, and technologically friendly will continue. As in the previous strategic plan, the focus will continue to be on licensing, examination, enforcement, legislation, and outreach and education.

The Board continues to have a strong commitment to *protect and serve Californians by setting, communicating, and enforcing standards for competent mental health practice*. Above all, the Board of Behavioral Sciences is dedicated to *consumer protection, accountability, transparency, customer service, integrity, quality, and respect*.

The Board continues to encourage the public to share and participate in this joint venture in maintaining the *highest quality of mental health care for all Californians*.

— Massimiliano “Max” Disposti

ABOUT THE BOARD

A PIONEERING BEGINNING

In 1945, California became the first state to register social workers with the formation of the Board of Social Work Examiners. Jump ahead 18 years to 1963, and this young regulatory agency received a new responsibility: administration of the Marriage, Family, and Child Counselor Act (later renamed the Social Worker and Marriage Counselor Act). New responsibilities meant a new name too. Appropriately, the Board was renamed the Social Worker and Marriage Counselor Qualification Board.

The 1960s proved to be a busy decade with the establishment of the Licensed Clinical Social Worker Program in 1967. Then in 1970, a licensing program for Educational Psychologists was added to the Board, inspiring a new name: the Board of Behavioral Science Examiners.

CONTINUING CHANGE

The Board took its current name, the Board of Behavioral Sciences, on January 1, 1997. This name better represents the true mission and duties of the Board.

Effective July 1, 1999, the then Marriage, Family, and Child Counselor profession underwent a name change. All references in statute or regulation to “licensed marriage, family, and child counselor” or “marriage, family, and child counselor” were changed to “licensed marriage and family therapist” or “marriage and family therapist.” The Board discontinued regulating MFT and LCSW corporations on January 1, 2000. However, the corporations are still required to file their articles with the California secretary of state.

THE BOARD FORGES AHEAD...

Focusing on its mission, The Board of Behavioral Sciences looks to continue its commitment to protect the consumers of California through effective enforcement, ensure credibility and high professional standards through examinations and licensing requirements, and provide excellent customer service to all its constituents.

THE BBS WAY

- Be a person of integrity.
- Be professional and dedicated.
- Serve with excellence.

MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES



OUR MISSION

Protect and serve Californians by setting, communicating, and enforcing standards for safe and competent mental health practices.



OUR VISION

All Californians are able to access the highest quality mental health services.



OUR VALUES

Accountability
Customer service
Integrity
Quality
Respect



Board of Behavioral Sciences

GOAL 1: LICENSING

Establish licensing standards to protect consumers and allow reasonable and timely access to the profession.

- 1.1** Streamline the application process with online submission to decrease processing times.
- 1.2** Collaborate with the Department of Consumer Affairs' Organizational Improvement Office to review the application process and implement improvements to reduce processing times.
- 1.3** Partner with other agencies and stakeholder groups to reduce barriers to licensure and foster the development of a diverse and culturally responsive mental health workforce.
- 1.4** Increase communication to applicants and licensees to reduce common application or licensing maintenance errors.
- 1.5** Develop video presentations to increase understanding of the licensing process and the pathways to licensure.



GOAL 2: EXAMINATION

Administer fair, valid, comprehensive, and relevant licensing examinations.

- 2.1** Identify and implement strategies to increase diversity of subject matter experts to ensure that examinations are culturally responsive and address diverse populations.
- 2.2** Improve the examination process to ensure timely and equitable access to licensure.
- 2.3** Review, report, and determine feasibility of adopting the use of the Association of Marital and Family Therapists Regulatory Boards (AMFTRB) national exam for the Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) Clinical exam.



GOAL 3: ENFORCEMENT

Protect the health and safety of consumers through the enforcement of laws.

- 3.1** Develop and implement an effective communication process from open to close of a case to ensure applicants, complainants, and respondents are better informed about the status of their case.
- 3.2** Educate licensees, associates, and consumers about the enforcement process to increase awareness of the Board's enforcement role and responsibilities.
- 3.3** Complete review and make recommendations on the Board's existing enforcement statutes and regulations for clarity, cohesiveness, and equity.
- 3.4** Evaluate and establish internal policies and procedures related to enforcement issues to ensure an equitable process that reflects rehabilitation versus punitive measures for the purpose of consumer protection.
- 3.5** Create diversity in the pool of qualified enforcement Subject Matter Experts to ensure equitable enforcement proceedings.



GOAL 4: LEGISLATION AND REGULATION

Ensure the statutes, regulations, policies, and procedures strengthen the Board's mandates and mission.

- 4.1** Implement statutes and regulations that comprehensively address telehealth and educate stakeholders, licensees, and consumers about telehealth.
- 4.2** Review current licensing requirements regarding registration, exam, and supervised experience timeframes and make recommendations for possible amendments to current statutes and regulations.
- 4.3** Review and update statutes and regulations related to additional coursework requirements for associates and the Continuing Education Unit requirements for licensees.
- 4.4** Modernize and clarify statutes and regulations related to advertising to ensure they keep up with current advertisement practices.



GOAL 5: ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Build an excellent organization through proper Board governance, effective leadership, and responsible management.

- 5.1** Review current organizational structure to ensure efficient operations and to foster upward career mobility among staff.
- 5.2** Collaborate with the Department of Consumer Affairs' Organizational Improvement Office to review internal processes and implement improvements to better serve the stakeholders and the Board.
- 5.3** Advance transition to reduce the use of paper documents to promote environmental friendliness, reduce costs, and reduce processing times.
- 5.4** Formalize a communications plan that will ensure quicker responses to emerging concerns from stakeholders.



GOAL 6: OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Engage stakeholders through continuous communication about the practice and regulation of the professions, and mental health care.

- 6.1** Create a more robust consumer and licensing education program through videos, social media campaigns, and electronic publications to ensure understanding of new changes in laws and regulations.
- 6.2** Collaborate with entities that work with consumers to increase equitable and inclusive outreach to diverse populations.
- 6.3** Increase Board engagement with schools, training programs, public events, and relevant professional organizations to raise awareness of the Board's role and activities.
- 6.4** Identify and implement strategies to gain increased participation in Board meetings from a wider group of stakeholders.



STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

To understand the environment in which the Board operates and to identify factors that could impact the Board's success, the California Department of Consumer Affairs' SOLID planning unit conducted an environmental scan of the internal and external environments by collecting information through the following methods:

- Interviews were conducted with all 13 board members, the executive officer, and six members of board management during the month of April 2021 to assess the challenges and opportunities the Board is facing or will face in the upcoming years.
- Online surveys were sent to external stakeholders and Board staff on March 30, 2021, and closing on April 23, 2021. In the survey, external stakeholders and Board staff provided anonymous input regarding the challenges and opportunities the Board is facing or will face in the upcoming years. A total of 11 staff and 1,976 external stakeholders participated in the survey.

The most significant themes and trends identified from the environmental scan were discussed by Board members and the executive officer during two strategic planning sessions facilitated by SOLID planning on September 9, 2021, and October 4, 2021. This information guided the Board in the review of its mission, vision, and values while directing the strategic goals and objectives outlined in its new strategic plan.





Board of Behavioral Sciences

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