

AN OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ALABAMA BOARD OF EXAMINERS IN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY

ABEMFT *Newsline*

New Immigration Law as it Effects Licensure

With the numerous news stories covering Alabama's new Immigration Law, you are probably already well aware of some of the controversy, political aspects, and may even have strong opinions one way or the other on this subject. We now know that this law has a direct impact on licensure in our State. Specifically, professional licensure has been interpreted as a benefit and therefore citizenship is required in order to hold professional licensure in Alabama. After much debate (between State Departments) on how exactly to implement and enforce this statute, The ABEMFT has now been given a clear directive. Before we can issue an initial license or a renewal license, we must first obtain documentation proving that the applicant is a United States Citizen. Therefore, the ABEMFT has adopted a two part compliance plan: 1. The application for licensure has been modified to require proof of citizenship before an initial license is ever issued; and 2.

For the next Renewal, all licensees must submit proof of citizenship before the renewal certificate can be issued. This will only be required once on your next renewal (due to now requiring the information prior to future license issuance).

Although, we have always required social security numbers and place of birth on initial applications, we have further been advised that we must request additional specific documents to prove citizenship. The documents that are acceptable to prove citizenship are listed on page 2 of this issue of *ABEMFT Newsline*.

We sincerely understand the inconvenience this will place on our licensees for your next renewal and in addition, this has become an administrative nightmare. However, we must adhere to the laws of the State of Alabama. We will be working diligently to process this additional paperwork as quickly as possible and we thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Cha, Cha, Changes

The ABEMFT is now in its fifteenth year of operation. During this time, the Board has consistently reviewed the Rules and Regulations to ensure they are current with national marriage and family therapy practice standards in order to best serve consumers of MFT services in Alabama. Last year's review of the Rules and Regulations produced the most changes to date. These new Rules and Regulations are posted in their entirety at www.mft.alabama.gov. In addition, e-mail blasts have been sent to all licensees' e-mail address on record (and also posted on the web site) advising of the new Rules and Regulations. If you are not receiving e-mail updates from the ABEMFT, please check with the Board office to ensure that your e-mail address is correct. Alabama MFT Educators

and Supervisors were also notified by mail of these changes (with new forms enclosed for their convenience). On pages 4 and 5 of this issue of *ABEMFT Newsline*, you will find a summary of each section of the Rules and Regulations that have been amended.

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ABEMFT Licensee Demographics

City:							
Alabaster:	3	Eutaw:	1	Madison:	7	Russellville:	1
Alexander City:	1	Evergreen:	1	Manhattan:	1	Saginaw:	1
Amos:	1	Fairhope:	10	Marshallville:	1	Selma:	2
Andalusia:	1	Florence:	2	Maryland:	1	Sheffield:	1
Anniston:	3	Fort Lauderdale:	1	Mobile:	24	Spanish Fort:	1
Auburn:	12	Fort Payne:	1	Monson:	1	Thomasville:	1
Auburn University:	7	Fort Rucker:	1	Montevallo:	3	Trussville:	5
Bay Minette:	1	Gadsden:	3	Montgomery:	26	Tuscaloosa:	15
Birmingham:	69	Grove Hill:	2	Mount Meigs:	1	Union Groove:	1
Brewton:	1	Gulfport:	1	Northport:	2	Vestavia Hills:	3
Chatom:	3	Guntersville:	3	Opelika:	13	Warrior:	2
Chelsea:	1	Helena:	1	Opp:	1	Yazoo City:	1
Colorado Springs:	1	Highland Heights:	1	Owens Crossroads:	1	Age: 80's and Up: 2	
Columbus:	3	Hoover:	2	Ozark:	1	70's: 22	
Dadeville:	1	Huntsville:	12	Oxford:	1	60's: 103	
Daphne:	6	Jackson:	1	Pelham:	3	50's: 77	
Dothan:	7	Lanett:	3	Prattville:	1	40's: 33	
Enterprise:	4	Las Vegas:	1	Rancho Cucamonga:	1	30's: 53	
		Los Angelas:	1	Redstone Arsenal:	2	20's: 12	

Additional Renewal Documentation Required

In order to comply with the new Alabama Immigration Law, all licensees must prove citizenship before their renewal can be processed. The ABEMFT has been advised that any one of the following items will be sufficient to prove citizenship. Therefore, one of the following documents must be mailed to the ABEMFT office for your next renewal. Once this is on file, you will not have to resubmit.

- ▶ A driver's license or non-driver's identification card issued by the Alabama Department of Public Safety or the equivalent agency of another state within the United States, provided that the governmental agency of another state within the United States requires proof of lawful presence in the United States as a condition of issuance of the driver's license or non-driver's identification card.
- ▶ A birth certificate in the United States or one of its territories.
- ▶ Pertinent pages of a United States valid or expired passport identifying the person and the person's passport number, or the person's United States passport.
- ▶ United States naturalization documents or the number of the certificate of naturalization.
- ▶ Other documents or methods of proof of United States citizenship issued by the federal government pursuant to the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, as amended.

- ▶ Bureau of Indian Affairs card number, tribal treaty card number, or tribal enrollment number.
- ▶ A consular report of birth abroad of a citizen of the United States of America.
- ▶ A certificate of citizenship issued by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services.
- ▶ A certification of report of birth issued by the United States Department of State.
- ▶ An American Indian card, with KIC classification, issued by the United States Department of Homeland Security.
- ▶ Final adoption decree showing the person's name and United States birthplace.
- ▶ An official United States military record of service showing the applicant's place of birth in the United States.

ABEMFT *Newsline* is an official publication of the Alabama State Board of Examiners in Marriage and Family Therapy. This publication is intended for a wide audience to alert licensees to matters of possible procedural, legal, legislative, and regulatory interest. It should not be relied upon, nor is it intended to provide legal, insurance, or accounting advice. Licensees should consult their lawyers, insurance agents, and accountants before taking any action in response to this newsletter, as the opinions expressed herein may be completely altered by the licensees' actual facts and/or be time sensitive.

The MFT Difference

By Kelly Moates, Chair

Over time, people are more readily taking advantage of mental health services than in the past. However, the public continues to have misconceptions in recognizing the difference between marriage and family therapists and other mental health professions as well. This is communicated by questioning why counseling courses are not approved in their application or why a LPC cannot serve as their supervisor. My intentions are to use this article to point out the critical distinctions of MFT and provide some reasoning into why ABEMFT strictly adheres to the requirements outlined in the Rules and Regulations for applicants.

Marriage and family therapists are highly trained mental health professionals who bring a family oriented approach to therapy. Unique to any other mental health provider, marriage and family therapists are educated, trained and supervised to assess and treat people in the context of their relationships. Trained in psychotherapy and family systems, MFT's focus on understanding their clients' symptoms and their interactive patterns with family and friends that may contribute to the problem or help resolve the problem. Research continues to demonstrate the effectiveness of marriage and family therapy in treating the full range of mental and emotional disorders and health problems through therapy conducted with individuals, couples and families. Marriage and Family Therapists are recognized by the federal government as one of the five core mental health professionals. The core professionals include psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, clinical social workers, psychiatric nurse specialists, and marriage and family therapists. Marriage and family therapy's prominence in the mental

health field has increased due to its brief, solution-focused treatment, family-centered approach, and demonstrated effectiveness.

Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists are required to complete graduate coursework specific to Marriage and Family Therapy, pass the National Examination in Marital and Family Therapy and complete two years post-graduate experience supervised by a Board approved Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor. Once licensed, MFTs must maintain continuing education in oriented or systems perspectives to therapy in order to demonstrate their continued skills in family oriented or systems perspectives to therapy. Alabama Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists provide a distinct discipline in the mental health field which has never previously been licensed in our state before this Board was established in 1997. ABEMFT's role is to regulate the profession by ensuring those licensed in MFT have demonstrated the required education, training, supervision and experience, which are heavily focused on systems theory and detailed in the Rules and Regulations. ABEMFT is committed to protecting families from unqualified providers. When an Alabamian is vulnerable and seeking help from a MFT, ABEMFT has ensured that those licensed as a MFT are qualified to provide the help that they seek. As a fellow MFT, this information is not new to you. However, we hope that you allow this article to refresh you on how MFT is distinct. ABEMFT encourages you to share these facts with your professional audiences and your personal sphere of influence. Together we can continue to educate the public and clarify the role that MFT's provide in mental health.

National Disciplinary Data Bank

ABEMFT reports all disciplinary actions to the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) for Health Care Integrity and Protection as required by Federal Law. The following is a list of organizations required to report:

- Medical malpractice payers
- State healthcare practitioner licensing and certification authorities (Including medical and dental boards)
- Hospitals
- Other healthcare entities with formal peer review (HMO's group practices, managed care organizations)
- Professional societies with formal peer review
- State entity licensing and certification authorities
- Health Plans

The following information is available on this database:

- Medical malpractice payments
- Any adverse licensure actions
- Adverse clinical privileging actions
- Adverse professional society membership actions
- Any negative action or finding by a State licensing or certification authority
- Peer review organization negative actions or findings against a health care practitioner or entity
- Civil judgements (health care-related)
- Criminal convictions (health care-related)
- Exclusions from Federal or State health care programs
- Other adjudicated actions or decisions (formal or official actions, availability of due process mechanism and based on acts or omissions that affect or could affect the payment, provision, or delivery of a health care item or service).

CE Requirements Amended

Intern Renewal



The Rules and Regulations, CHAPTER 536-X-6-.01 details the CE requirements and is available at www.mft.alabama.gov. In addition the CE Reporting Form has been updated to reflect the changes in CE Requirements and is also available on the Board web site and is located under the "Forms" tab.

LMFT's: 40 hours (minimum: 10 hours in Clinical MFT; 6 hours in Diagnosis & Treatment, and 6 hours in Professional Issues & Ethics.)

Supervisors: 5 hours in Supervision

Associates: 20 hours (minimum: 5 hours in Clinical MFT; 3 hours in Diagnosis & Treatment; and 3 hours in Professional Issues & Ethics.)

Interns: 10 hours (minimum: 3 hours in Clinical MFT; 3 hours in Diagnosis & Treatment; and 3 hours in Professional Issues & Ethics.)

MFT Intern designation is now required to be renewed every two years if applicable. Please refer to the Rules and Regulations, CHAPTER 536-X-4.01 Requirements for designation: Marriage and Family Therapy Intern for this information in its entirety.

In summary, in order for an Intern to renew, 10 hours of CE with a minimum in Clinical MFT; 3 hours in Diagnosis & Treatment; and 3 hours in Professional Issues & Ethics is now required.

ABEMFT Strengthens Standards of Conduct

ABEMFT has strengthened the standards of conduct of MFT's regarding sexual intimacy with current clients, former clients and relatives thereof as well as students and supervisees. The following highlight the significant changes in this area. Please refer to the Rules and Regulations, CHAPTER 536-X-8 Standards of Conduct of Marriage and Family Therapists for the information in its entirety.

- Sexual intimacy with current clients is prohibited.
- Sexual intimacy with a current client's immediate family member is prohibited. An immediate family member is defined as a mother, father, son, daughter, step-mother, step-father, brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, step-brother, step-sister, grandmother, grandfather, first

cousin, niece, nephew, and current and potential spouses or cohabitating partners of any of these immediate family relationships.

- Sexual intimacy with former clients and relatives of a former client is likely to be harmful and is therefore prohibited for five years following the termination of therapy or last professional contact. Should therapists engage in sexual intimacy with former clients or immediate family members of a former client following five years after termination of last professional contact, the burden shifts to the therapist to demonstrate that there has been no exploitation or injury to the former client.
- Marriage and family therapists shall not provide clinical services to an individual with whom the marriage and family therapist

has had a prior sexual relationship.

- Marriage and family therapists shall not sexually harass clients. Sexual harassment includes sexual solicitation or requests for sexual favors.
- Marriage and family therapists do not engage in sexual intimacy with undergraduate or graduate students or supervisees during the evaluative or training relationship between the therapist and student or supervisee. Should a supervisor engage in sexual activity with a former student or supervisee, the burden of proof shifts to the supervisor to demonstrate that there has been no exploitation or injury to the student or supervisee.

MFT Education for Initial Licensure

CHAPTER 536-X-5 Board Course Requirements (available on the ABEMFT web site) has been amended. The AG's office has advised that the new requirements for initial licensure (and corresponding new forms) will apply to individuals who apply for licensure after February 6, 2012.

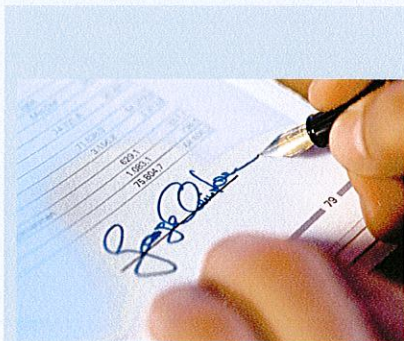
Individuals already in process for licensure will continue their application process under the Rules and Regulations in effect at the time of their application. The following is a summary of courses now required for initial licensure:

- **Marriage and Family Studies**
(2 courses, minimum)
- **Marriage and Family Therapy**
(3 courses, minimum)
- **Human Development**
(2 courses, minimum)
- **Professional Issues & Ethics**
(1 course, minimum)
- **Research**
(1 course, minimum)
- **Mental Health Diagnosis**
(1 course, minimum)
This course will be required of all licensees beginning January 1, 2013.

MFT Supervision for Initial Licensure

Students can now use their graduate internship supervision hours to count toward 100 of the 200 post-degree supervision requirement for LMFT if:

1. They apply and are granted internship status prior to beginning their internship (this would ensure that their supervisory arrangement would be Board approved);
 2. Internship must contain a ratio of 1 supervision hour for every 5 client contact hours; and
 3. Supervision and client contact hours are completed concurrently.
- (See Chapter 536-X-2-.02 for details)



New Supervision Log & New MFT 10 Form

available at

www.mft.alabama.gov

(under "Forms" tab)

LMFT Supervisor Mentor

Previously titled, "LMFT Supervisor of Supervision" has now been renamed, "LMFT Supervisor Mentor". A complete definition of LMFT Supervisor Mentor can be found in the Rules and Regulations, CHAPTER 536-X-

3-.01(5) Board Approved Marriage and Family Therapy Designations, LMFT Supervisor Mentor.

ABEMFT Calendar

BOARD MEETING DATES 2013

Meetings convene at 10:00 a.m.
at the Board office in Montgomery

February 15

(Application Deadline: February 1st for above meeting)

June 14

(Application Deadline: May 31st for above meeting)

September 13

(Application Deadline: August 30th for above meeting)

The above are ABEMFT's regular Board Meetings and are open to the public for observation. The Chair may call special Board Meetings or reschedule as needed. Any change to the above dates will be advertised in advance of the Board Meeting at www.mft.alabama.gov and on the Secretary of State's web site located at www.sos.alabama.gov in accordance with the Alabama Open Meetings Act.



Mark your calendar with important ABEMFT Dates in 2013

IMPORTANT 2013 RENEWAL DATES

March 1st—Late Renewal Window Closes

October 1st—Renewal Notices Mailed

(for licenses expiring on December 31st)

December 31st—Licenses Expire

Renewal notices will be mailed both by USPS and e-mail on October 1st to each licensee's address on record. Also, on this date, the renewal application will be available at www.mft.alabama.gov. Although, licensees have a late renewal period that extends until March 1, 2014 (with additional late renewal fee), no one may work as an LMFT with an expired license in Alabama. Therefore, plan ahead to prevent any interruption in licensure.

2013 Registration and Administration Dates for the National Examination in Marital & Family Therapy

Candidate Registration Opens	Candidate Registration Closes	Exam Administration Dates	Score Reports Post to Boards during the week of:
10/15/2012	1/7/2013	1/14/2013—2/9/2013	3/4/2013—3/8/2013
12/21/2012	5/13/2013	5/20/2013—6/15/2013	7/8/2013—7/12/2013
3/18/2013	8/5/2013	8/12/2013—9/7/2013	9/30/2013—10/4/2013
7/22/2013	10/21/2013	10/28/2013-11/23/2013	12/16/2012-12/20/2013