

Department of Commerce, Community
and Economic Development

Division of Corporations, Business
and Professional Licensing

Marital and Family Therapy

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2025



Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development
Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing

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This report is required under Alaska Statute 08.01.070(10).

**Marital and Family Therapy
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Board Membership *(as of the Date This Report was Approved)*

Date of Final Board Approval: 6/13/2025

<u>Name</u>	<u>Appointed</u>	<u>Expires</u>
Noah Shields, Chair, Therapist/Counselor	03/01/2023	03/01/2027
Shawnmarie Carpenter, Therapist	03/01/2025	03/01/2029
Chantal Cohen, Therapist/Counselor	03/07/2025	03/01/2029
Kayla Green, Member of the Public	03/01/2024	03/01/2028

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Accomplishments

- Adopted regulation changes in Title 12, Chapter 19 of the Alaska Administrative Code, clarifying and streamlining language, aligning with statute changes from HB 126, updating approved continuing education activities, and revising definitions.
- Reviewed and approved continuing education courses to ensure relevance and benefit to the practice of marital and family therapy.
- Filled a vacant seat on the Board of Marital and Family Therapy (BMFT).
- Closed a license application ethics review.
- The BMFT recommended a reduction in licensing fees due to a surplus of funds, and this recommendation was approved and adopted for the most recent renewal period in December 2024.
- Sent a board member to participate in the AMFTRB Annual Meeting in Baltimore, MD.
- Supported healthcare-related legislation by submitting letters of support for HB 131 and SB 124.
- Conducted three board meetings during FY25, including one focused on proposed regulations and statutes.

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Activities

- The BMFT meets to conduct board meetings via online or in-person where they review applications for licensure and continuing education approval, listen to financial, investigative, and division reports from staff, hear public comments, discuss regulations and statutes, and address new business.
- In between board meetings, the board members vote online on applications for licensure, application for supervised practice, application for approved supervisor, and application for continuing education course approval.
- Reviewed investigations and determined appropriate disciplinary actions when necessary.
- Staff Updates
- Assigned board members to reach out to legislators regarding support for proposed statute changes.
- One board member has volunteered to participate in the 2025 AMFTRB 39th Annual Meeting of State Delegates in Chicago, Illinois to stay informed about national regulatory issues and support state-level improvements.

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Needs

1. One public member seat remains open on the BMFT, which continues to impact the Board's ability to meet quorum requirements when members are absent or inactive.
2. The Board will initiate a new regulations project aimed at further streamlining language and ensuring alignment with statutes.
3. The 39th Annual Meeting of State Delegate will take place on Monday, September 15, 2025 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in Chicago, Illinois. This meeting plays a critical role in supporting the Alaska Board of Marital and Family Therapy by providing insight into emerging national regulatory issues in the field of marriage and family therapy. Participation in this event enables Alaska to both align with national standards and explore regulatory strategies that enhance support for MFT professionals within our state.
4. The hiring freeze will significantly impact the board's operational capacity by preventing the recruitment of sufficient licensing examiners. The already previous staffing shortage has resulted in misplaced applications, prolonged delays in application processing, and inconsistent communication with licensees. Addressing this issue—whether through lifting the freeze, enhancing training, or offering competitive compensation—is essential to ensure the board can fulfill its responsibilities effectively.
5. The board remains committed to enhancing license portability for Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs). In collaboration with the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), the board will continue to assess whether additional regulatory or statutory changes are needed to support this goal. Improving portability facilitates the ability of licensed MFTs to obtain licensure across state lines more efficiently. By strengthening portability in Alaska, we not only enable qualified MFTs from other states to practice in Alaska but also ensure that Alaskans—including short-term visitors and temporary workers—have greater access to essential mental health services.
6. In the upcoming year, the board plans to review the current requirements for the renewal of approved supervisors to ensure alignment with existing regulations, including those requiring continuing education. This review will help identify whether a separate renewal process for supervisors—distinct from the general license renewal application—is necessary. It may also reveal the need for additional regulatory changes to strengthen oversight and clarify supervision standards. Any potential changes will follow the standard regulatory process, including board discussion, public comment, and possible revision. This effort reflects the board's commitment to maintaining high standards for supervision and supporting the effective preparation of MFT licensure candidates in Alaska.
7. In the year ahead, the board will prioritize securing legislative support for the publication and implementation of board-approved statutory changes. These efforts are essential to ensure that proposed updates—designed to enhance clarity, efficiency, and professional standards—can move forward through the formal statutory process. By engaging with legislative stakeholders early and effectively, the board aims to build alignment and facilitate a smooth path toward adoption of these important changes.
8. In the coming year, the board will focus on drafting a formal Position Statement regarding Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) license compacts, as recommended by the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT). This statement will be informed by the findings of the AAMFT position and will aim to clarify the board's stance on the feasibility, benefits, and challenges of compact participation. The Position Statement will serve to educate licensees and stakeholders, and guide future discussions on potential regulatory or legislative actions the board may consider in support of compact implementation.