



Board of Psychologist and Psychological Associate Examiners

Alaska Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing

Dec 2, 2022 at 10:30 a.m.

Members Present: Bernard Gatewood, Erin Johnson, Sherri Scott
Staff Present: Sara Chambers, Logan Bugayong, Alison Osborne
Members Absent: Bradley McConnell

1. Call to Order

- A. The meeting was called to order by Chair Johnson at 10:30 a.m.
- B. Mr. Gatewood moved to approve the agenda with the addition of Ms. Scott's presentation. The motion received unanimous consent.
- C. All members disclosed they had no ethical conflicts.

2. Presentation on Distance Supervision

Eric Boyer, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, and Dr. Cody Chipp, licensed psychologist and independent consultant, presented on supervision through distance delivery. Mr. Boyer explained the role of the AMHTA and how it supports its beneficiaries, providers, and public and private agencies through its statutory role. AMHTA was contacted for assistance by the Ketchikan Wellness Coalition so their psychologists could travel outside Ketchikan to complete their supervision requirements. Since this is a significant travel cost, AMHTA is interested in exploring alternatives to requiring travel for in-person supervision. They are also actively working to expand and advance opportunities and "cutting edge" ways to address challenges in rural areas. He stated that it would be ideal to access supervision within the provider's area of service but recognizes this is not always possible.

Dr. Chipp stated he had experienced challenges across Alaska with psychologists seeking supervision when located in rural areas. He cited flexibilities in supervision currently available in other boards' regulations and recommendations by the APA and other authorities.

Chair Johnson said that she was unaware of any research regarding complaints or investigations of ethical violations by supervisors. She was aware of anecdotes but had not seen any research. Dr. Chipp was also unaware of research and suggested that this board review the outcome of complaints received by other Alaska behavioral health boards. Dr. Chipp said his specific request today is for the board to consider distance supervision during the post-doctoral phase rather than pre-doctoral; however, he was not opposed to expanding since those programs seemed to already have more oversight and less variability. Chair Johnson asked about any concerns with supervision by persons who may not be familiar with Alaska. Dr. Chipp said he wasn't but that it could be cared for by the board if they wished to pursue it. He said it might be important for the supervisor to be licensed in Alaska if the provider is obtaining supervision here so the board maintained oversight.

The board said they would appreciate any additional data the presenters may be able to offer. Director Chambers said she would ask the division's Chief Investigator to provide a de-identified overview of complaints filed regarding all of Alaska's behavioral health boards.

3. Public Comment

Ms. Brittany Pope suggested to the board that they look at California's regulations and disciplinary outcomes since distance supervision is allowed. She asked the board if they are considering pre- and/or post-doctoral distance supervision, and the chair stated the board has had ongoing discussions about both and is hoping to see the data. Ms. Pope mentioned that the board has set a precedent of approving supervision plans for post-doctoral supervision; Chair Johnson said she did not remember ever approving a plan for distance supervision. Director Chambers said the board could veer from precedent as long as it explained its decision on the record.

Ms. Malan Paquette registered concerns about the board's access by members of the public. At the chair's request, Director Chambers clarified that the board was not adopting regulations at this meeting and that it is a special meeting that did not require a public comment session, although one was provided. She offered additional coaching and education on the public comment and executive session requirements and processes.

4. Discussion on Distance Supervision

The board received several letters in support of allowing distance supervision, as well as several research documents containing data on the topic.

Ms. Scott stated the board has earnestly pursued matters with a desire to address needs of the profession and public protection, especially given board members' rural experiences. She shared the information she obtained at the ASPPB conference and mentioned an article on distance supervision from 2019 that was shared at the event. She said one jurisdiction representative told her that over the last 2-3 years, their psychologist candidates are generally less prepared; he did not provide any context for that statement. There was not a lot of information provided across the 34 jurisdictions present and that they are all awaiting more data on distance supervision; however, she said she heard "most states are reverting to face-to-face pre-Covid guidelines."

The chair stated that the board was not planning to propose new regulations at this meeting and encouraged board members to continue to research. Mr. Gatewood said that he was concerned after reading the letters that the board was "against" approving distance supervision. He felt the board is interested in doing this but needs additional information, which they are pursuing. He offered his personal and professional experience regarding use of distance delivery systems and the need for candidates in rural areas to have supervisors who are familiar with the area. Director Chambers asked how that is happening now, citing the AMHTA funding request. The board was not familiar with how rural candidates are obtaining supervision now.

The chair requested the board gather data on jurisdictional requirements for both pre- and post-doctoral requirements, including breakdowns of percentages of allowable distance supervision, as well

as how familiarity with rural or unique populations are obtained. She would also like the board to consider any concerns when the candidate is the only behavioral health provider in the area and how “back up” services are made available.

5. Review and Vote on Proposed Alternative Supervision Plan

Director Chambers reminded the board that this application was previously posted in OnBoard and received three votes; one vote was to table for discussion, and two were to approve. Ms. Pope and her supervisor, Dr. Horner, are available to answer questions. The chair stated that she voted to table because approval would veer from precedence, which they can do but need to do wisely. Ms. Scott said she approved this request because it is a hybrid model that includes in-person and distance, as well as travel to the community by the supervisor. She additionally noted that Ms. Pope’s education and prior experience was in a rigorous setting. Mr. Gatewood said he voted to approve on the same basis. The chair appreciated these points and asked Dr. Horner his experience generally and with Alaska. He has been in the state and providing health care in rural Alaska since 2008 with a personal care agency. In 2010 he became an LPC and began his doctoral program in 2018 and became a licensed psychologist in 2020. He has worked with Ms. Pope previously with LPC supervisory practice, as well. The chair thanked him for indulging their questions.

Ms. Pope mentioned that Ketchikan has several master’s-level clinicians, and they meet monthly. She works with $\frac{3}{4}$ of them regularly. She has been licensed in Alaska and Ohio as an LPC is a board-approved supervisor in that profession. She has worked in rural Appalachia. She created an emergency contact list for high-risk clients to receive back-up services, as well as a group practice who can step in if she is unavailable. She has worked in Prince of Wales, Metlakatla, and other rural areas.

The chair stated that all applications are reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and she believes these emergency plans and supervisor/supervisee experience are compelling aspects of this plan.

Motion: Ms. Scott moved to approve the Alternate Supervision Plan for Brittany Pope. Seconded by Mr. Gatewood; the motion passed unanimously.

The board encouraged Ms. Pope to include the plan in her application for temp licensure.

6. Discuss other board business

Director Chambers went over implications of the upcoming change in her position, scheduled to take place this month.

The board discussed any pending due-outs. Chair Johnson mentioned that there should be several sets of minutes to be finalized and requested they be posted in OnBoard. She also indicated the board had requested information to be reviewed by the Department of Law. Given the staff changes, the chair and director will review the list of past meeting minutes and discuss the status any outstanding items. Chambers will send the board members a poll to schedule a teleconference meeting in early February.

7. Adjourned at 12:37 p.m. by unanimous consent.

Respectfully submitted:

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Sara Chambers, DCCED Boards and Regulations Advisor

Approved:

DocuSigned by:
Erin Johnson

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Dr. Erin Johnson, Chairperson
Board of Psychologists & Psychological Associate Examiners

Date: 3/7/2023