



# TEXAS COUNSELING ASSOCIATION

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Testimony by Michael Shufelt Moyer, PhD, LPC-Supervisor

## Texas Sunset Advisory Commission

### Staff Report: Texas Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors

April 25, 2018

I am a Licensed Professional Counselor-Supervisor with a small practice in San Antonio. I am also a Counselor Educator at the University of Texas – San Antonio. I am speaking today on behalf of the Texas Counseling Association where I will become President-elect in July.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your hard work. The Texas Counseling Association supports the staff recommendation to create the Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council to house the boards that regulate LPCs, LMFTs, Social Workers and Psychologists. That said, we disagree with the proposed structure of the Council.

It seems there are primarily two outstanding issues. Will each of the BHEC appointees, including professional members, be able to vote? And, will the psychology board be included in BHEC?

The concern that allowing professional members to vote will result in an over-reach and a meddling in the scope of practice of the participating boards has no basis in fact. There is already evidence, based on the collaboration across our boards, that professional members of different boards can work together without stepping on each other's toes or their scope of practice.

It is a fear of the unknown, in my opinion, that is driving this concern. Change is scary. I see that every day in my practice and in my work with students. But because change is scary is no reason to avoid it.

Some psychologists asserted in public comment they are unique from other mental health professionals because they hold doctorates; they should therefore not be associated with boards that regulate mental health professionals who hold masters' degrees. As a Licensed Professional Counselor-Supervisor who holds a PhD from a nationally certified graduate program in Texas, I am, honestly, offended by this assertion. It is just not true. There are many LPCs, LMFTs and Social Workers who have earned their doctorates and are outstanding mental health professionals.

I also read that some psychologists are concerned they are somehow being punished via consolidation and that they feel their inclusion on BHEC will irreparably harm the progress Texas has made in mental health policy. Again, I would suggest it is fear of the unknown that is driving these concerns.

(over)

The recommendation to create BHEC follows months, some would say years, of study to determine how Texas can efficiently and effectively regulate mental health professionals. BHEC is a solution that will enhance the progress we have made in mental health policy. It will prevent the public from getting lost in multiple agencies as they try to find a mental health professional – or file a claim against one. It will create consistency in processes for those mental health professionals who hold multiple licenses. It will expedite licensing and help address the horrific mental health workforce shortages across Texas.

The purpose of Sunset is to shine a light on state agencies and programs to see if they are still relevant in a changing world and, if so, how can they do their jobs better? This review found that each of our regulatory boards is still relevant but they can do their jobs better by working together in the Behavioral Health Executive Council. Allowing the psychology board to stand alone will not “give Texas its money’s worth.” It will duplicate costs and create confusion for the public.

Thank you for your consideration.