

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Janet Wood](#)
Subject: FW: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)
Date: Monday, April 09, 2018 2:02:06 PM

-----Original Message-----

From: sundrupal@capitol.local [<mailto:sundrupal@capitol.local>]
Sent: Monday, April 09, 2018 1:22 PM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission
Subject: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)

Agency: TEXAS STATE BOARD EXAMINERS PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS

First Name: Kate

Last Name: Walker

Title:

Organization you are affiliated with:

Email: kwalker@achievebalance.org

City: The Woodlands

State: Texas

Your Comments About the Staff Report, Including Recommendations Supported or Opposed:

To: Sunset Review Committee Members

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the latest Sunset Review findings. I am a licensed professional counselor supervisor and licensed marriage and family therapist supervisor in The Woodlands, Texas. As an active member of the mental health provider community I:

- Serve The Woodlands and surrounding communities from my marriage and family counseling practice achievebalance.org
- Train LPC and LMFT professionals who wish to become supervisors via my quarterly 40 hour courses through my company Kate Walker Training (www.katewalkertraining.com)
- Provide online and face to face continuing education to LPC and LMFT professionals
- Authored a book, "My Next Steps: Create a Counseling Career You'll Love"
- Served as past president of the Texas Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (TACES)
- Currently serve as the TACES liaison to the LPC board and as a member of the Texas Counseling Association Strategic Planning Committee
- Teach marriage and family theories at Sam Houston State University

In short, I am very invested and have a deep love for my profession and the good work we do.

I agree with your finding that the continued administrative attachment of the marriage and family therapy, professional counseling and social work boards to a large agency is still not working. They are underfunded and understaffed. The dysfunction created by such a model places the livelihoods of licensees in jeopardy and puts the public at risk.

I support the staff recommendation that the consolidated agency [TSBEMFT, TSBEPC, TSBSWE and TSBEP] structure of the Behavioral Health Executive Council presents the best approach to align the regulation of these behavioral health professions and elevate the attention and oversight of these programs and that more efficient and effective regulation of these professions will not only provide improved services and increased responsiveness to licensees but also will better protect behavioral health care consumers.

I disagree with the staff recommendation that the executive council would be composed of one public member appointed by each of the four boards and an independent presiding officer appointed by the governor. I believe you should follow Texas Counseling Association's recommendation that the structure of BHEC, as proposed during the last Sunset Review, should include one professional and one public member appointed by each board, with the presiding officer appointed by the Governor. My opinion is based on the following:

- None of the boards that regulate health professionals is composed exclusively of public members. In fact, the Sunset Commission staff recommendations for the Board of Medical Examiners does not propose to restructure that Board to create an all or majority public member structure.
- The original recommendation for BHEC still creates a public majority board. Including professional members brings expertise that would likely be lost if BHEC was composed of public members with professional members relegated to "ex officio" roles.
- The behavioral health regulatory boards currently housed at HHSC work collaboratively with respect for the uniqueness of each specialization. This is evidenced by their implementation of consistent disciplinary matrices and alignment of rules where appropriate.
- Including professional members on BHEC is much more likely to enhance consistency in standards than interference on standards of practice, licensing and enforcement decisions since no profession would hold a majority on BHEC.

Thank you for the opportunity to record my comments about this very important issue.

Respectfully,

Kate M. Walker Ph.D., LPC/LMFT Supervisor

Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency: I believe you should follow Texas Counseling Association's recommendation that the structure of BHEC, as proposed during the last Sunset Review, should include one professional and one public member appointed by each board, with the presiding officer appointed by the Governor.

My Comment Will Be Made Public: I agree