

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Janet Wood](#)
Subject: FW: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)
Date: Friday, June 27, 2014 4:47:58 PM

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

From: sundrupal@capitol.local [<mailto:sundrupal@capitol.local>]
Sent: Friday, June 27, 2014 4:48 PM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission
Subject: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)

Submitted on Friday, June 27, 2014 - 16:47

Agency: DEPARTMENT STATE HEALTH SERVICES DSHS

First Name: L.

Last Name: Hayes

Title: Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

Organization you are affiliated with: TAMFT/private practice mental health provider

City: Hondo

State: Texas

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

I am concerned about the proposed decision to move the Marriage and Family Therapy licensure under an entity which has no history with, or understanding of, the provision of mental health services in the state of Texas. This licensure requires a Master's degree to even begin the process to reach independent licensure status, qualifying the holder to provide quality mental health care to residents of this state, including veterans, couples, families, individuals, children & adolescents who are struggling with mental health and wellness issues. I am a doctoral level provider of empirically-supported mental health services in a rural community. My profession is identified by the United States federal government and the Texas Medical Liabilities Act as a "Health Provider". I believe our services should be monitored by the department with experience in provision of mental health services and which oversees other health care entities. I believe such a move to the Dept of Licensing Review would absolutely diminish public respect and trust in our professional presence, and the manner in which insurance companies view our importance. It may possibly have an impact on our ability as a profession to interest future providers to our field, if it is believed that the state of Texas sees no real difference between the oversight of those who cut and style hair and those who provide mental health services to individuals who are suicidal or couples trying to avoid divorce.

Another concern is that if this move occurs, it is possible that many licensees who owe federal student loans will not be able to repay those debts because of a reduction or cessation of reimbursement options. Additionally, how much sense does it make to force such a move from an entity who monitors mental health providers and the quality of services they provide to the public, and then ask the licensees to pay for the move they do not want and did not request? I am a Licensed MFT who worked 6 years to earn the Master's degree and then volunteered many years of services to earn hours toward my licensure. Following this, I worked 3 more years to complete a doctoral degree so that I may teach and research this very important aspect of a civil society. I absolutely do not want the work I did

and what that work currently symbolizes to me and to my rural community diminished due to a move to a department that oversees individuals who hold important, but not equally-educated or tasked occupational licenses. thank you for the opportunity to share my concerns, L. Hayes, PhD, LMFT

Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency: Improve the oversight guidelines of the Boards of Examiners who currently provide these important duties. Protection of the public from professional/personal ethical and legal violations is a very serious undertaking. I believe all entities need to be held accountable for the quality of their work, and motivations behind their actions--even governmental agencies. Before mental health providers act on a difficult case, we must ask ourselves "what our we doing, and why are we doing it? who will benefit and who may be harmed? will the benefit outweigh the potential for harm? how can we act for the most benefit and the least harm?" I believe all thinking people would do well to consider these things before moving forward.

My Comment Will Be Made Public: I agree