

AAMFT-California Division 2014 Advocacy Priorities

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The AAMFT-CA Legislative and Advocacy Committee has set four priorities for 2014, which were approved by the Board at the November 2013 meeting. We have already begun taking action on each of them:

1. **Resolving the BBS backlog of licensure applications.**

The current processing backlog for applications for MFT license exam eligibility is approximately eight months. Our lobbyist testified at a Senate budget committee hearing on the issue of returning state funds to boards and bureaus to reduce the backlog. In addition, we are coordinating with CAMFT and other associations on letters to the Governor and the Legislature emphasizing the importance of approving new positions at the BBS. We are cautiously optimistic that our individual and combined efforts can produce movement on this, and were pleased that the Governor's budget appears to include additional money for BBS hiring. However, the positions are not yet guaranteed.

2. **Inclusion of MFTs in health care reform wherever possible.**

We have been on conference calls with several associations and outside experts to learn more about how other states and counties are leveraging federal monies today to include MFTs within federally-funded systems of care through various contracts and waivers. We hope to use the information gained to provide guidance as we work collaboratively to secure MFT inclusion in the evolving systems of care.

3. **Publicizing our advocacy successes.**

In the past few years, we have successfully pushed for changes that others have not, including SB1172 (the ban on reparative therapy for minors), removing discrimination in child abuse reporting, and more. We are eager to tell the stories of our successes to members, nonmembers, and policymakers.

4. **Addressing the economic difficulty in becoming an MFT.**

The educational process for becoming an MFT has gotten longer and more expensive, and the average time one spends in internship is now more than four years. The BBS processing delays extend this time an additional eight months. Ultimately, many drop out of the licensing process, or choose other fields in the first place. We know this is a difficult and complex issue, and designating it as a committee priority for 2014 will allow us to dedicate some substantial

time to detailed exploration of the problem. We are looking at potential immediate and long-term solutions.

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