



# Pennsylvania Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

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October 20, 2008

Representative Michael Sturla  
Chairman, House Licensure Committee  
333 Main Capitol Bldg.  
PO Box 202096  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2096

Dear Chairman Sturla:

The Pennsylvania Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (PAMFT) appreciates the opportunity to submit comments on the amended version of HB 2352, a proposal to license bachelor level “human services professionals”. The amendment removes the title confusion of the original bill and is a step in the right direction.

Setting a basic standard of training for the individuals who provide human services for many of Pennsylvania’s most vulnerable citizens is a worthy goal. PAMFT believes we need to better protect those served through a variety of public and private programs, even though we continue to question whether licensure is the most effective way of accomplishing this goal.

If the licensure of “human service workers” moves forward, PAMFT believes the qualifications for licensure listed in HB 2352 need to be revised. The human service positions we are discussing tend to be entry-level, relatively low-paying jobs. These positions are currently filled by individuals from a broad range of educational backgrounds, while HB 2352 is focused primarily on licensing individuals with a bachelor’s degree in social work or social welfare. The state needs the number of workers and the diversity of skills that graduates from a variety of human service programs provide.

The Pennsylvania Association for Marriage and Family Therapy urges that basic standards be set that apply equally to individuals from diverse human service educational backgrounds. With that in mind, we propose replacing Section 7(g)(2) of HB 2352, the qualifications for the Human Services Professional license, with the following:

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*(2) The applicant:*

*(i) has received a bachelor's or master's degree from an accredited college or university with a major in behavioral science, child or human development, counseling, family studies, human services, marriage and family therapy, psychology, social work, social welfare or sociology.*

*(ii) has successfully completed 6 courses (3 or 4 credits each), acceptable to the board. These courses may be part of the degree program, post-degree courses or acceptable continuing education.*

*(iii) has successfully completed a) 500 hours of supervised human service experience as part of a degree program or b) 2000 hours of work in a human service field under the supervision of a licensed professional (psychiatrist, psychologist, social work, clinical social worker, marriage and family therapist, professional counselor or human services professional).*

PAMFT also proposes that Section 7(h)(2), the qualifications for the Human Services Professional Provisional license, read as follows:

*(2) The applicant has received a bachelor's degree or master's degree from an accredited college or university with a major in behavioral science, child or human development, counseling, family studies, human services, marriage and family therapy, psychology, social work, social welfare or sociology.*

The "Exemption from Licensure Examination" section of HB 2352 clearly covers only social workers. PAMFT proposes that Section 9(d) be replaced with the following more multidisciplinary standard:

*(d) Human Services Professional. The requirements of section 7(g)(3) shall not apply and a license shall be issued without examination to an applicant who meets one of the following requirements:*

*(1) Is licensed in a human service field in another state, or*

*(2) Has a bachelor's or master's degree from an accredited college or university with a major in behavioral science, child or human development, counseling, family studies, human services, marriage and family therapy, psychology, social work, social welfare or sociology, has successfully completed 4 courses acceptable to the board and has 3 years of previous work experience in a human service field.*

The Pennsylvania Association for Marriage and Family Therapy would support a licensure bill that incorporated these standards for the Licensed Human Services Professional.

Sincerely yours,

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