



Board of Behavioral Sciences

Memo

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To: Board Members

Date: October 27, 2025

From: Rosanne Helms
Legislative Manager

Subject: Amendments to Advertising Statutes for Associates and Trainees

At its September 20, 2024 meeting, the Board approved a four-step process to clarify and modernize its statutes and regulations related to advertising and client disclosure.

The order in which these changes are made and become effective in this proposal is critical in order to maintain consistency across license types, because some requirements are moving from statute to regulations, and vice versa. Therefore, the following implementation strategy was adopted:

- 1) **Step 1: Amend Advertising Regulations.** First, run the amendments to the advertising regulations (16 CCR §1811, proposed changes shown [here](#)). *(Status: This is currently in process. The public comment periods have ended, and the proposal is currently under final DCA review. It will next go to OAL for final consideration.)*
- 2) **Step 2: Statute Changes for Associates, Trainees, and Interns.** Next, run the statute changes shown in **Attachments 1** and **2** after the amendments to the advertising regulations are approved by the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) and become effective. *(This is the next step, which we are discussing today.)*
- 3) **Step 3: Amend Regulation Section 1880.** Next, strike regulation section 1880 (16 CCR §1880, **Attachment 3**) as a Section 100 change (change without regulatory effect) after the statute changes shown in **Attachments 1** and **2** become effective. *(This will be the final step.)*
- 4) **Additional Step: Amend Advertising Definitions in Statute.** These statute changes can stand alone and are not dependent on the timing of the other changes. They make the definition of “advertising” in each practice act consistent across the Board’s four license types. *(Status: These changes were made as part of SB 775 (Chapter 787, Statutes of 2025) and become effective on January 1, 2026.)*

Next Steps

Step 1 (amend advertising regulations) is currently in process and nearing completion. The “Additional Step” (amend advertising definitions in statute) is complete. The next step in the process is Step 2, which is to run statutory amendments for associates, trainees, and interns. The needed changes consist of the following:

1. Statute for Associates (Attachment 1)

- **BPC §4980.44(a)** covers client disclosure requirements for MFT associates. It requires that MFT associates inform each client that they are an unlicensed registrant, provide their registration number, name of employer, and indicate what type of licensee is supervising them.

The subdivision, which is much more detailed in its requirements than the comparable statutes for ASWs and APCCs, states the following:

BPC §4980.44(a) Inform each client or patient prior to performing any mental health and related services that the person is an unlicensed registered associate marriage and family therapist, provide the person’s registration number and the name of the person’s employer, and indicate whether the person is under the supervision of a licensed marriage and family therapist, licensed clinical social worker, licensed professional clinical counselor, psychologist licensed pursuant to Chapter 6.6 (commencing with Section 2900), licensed educational psychologist, or a licensed physician and surgeon certified in psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.

In contrast, here are the comparable statutes discussing what ASWs and APCCs must disclose:

For ASWs: BPC §4996.18(g) All applicants and registrants shall inform each client or patient before performing any professional services that the applicant or registrant is unlicensed and is under the supervision of a licensed professional.

*For APCCs: BPC §4999.46.1(b) An associate shall do both of the following:
(1) Inform each client, before performing any professional services, that the associate is unlicensed and under supervision.*

The proposed language makes the client disclosure language more consistent across the license types. The proposed language requires all applicants and registrants to inform each client that they are unlicensed and under the supervision of a licensed professional, and to provide the name of their employer or if not employed, the entity for which they volunteer. The requirement for AMFTs to provide the registration number

has been removed, as it is not consistent with the requirements for the other registration types (although this must be disclosed by associates separately in the required notice to consumers upon initiation of services).

- **BPC §4980.44(b)** addresses advertising requirements for MFT associates. It specifies additional information that must be contained in an MFT associate's advertisement (that the person is a registrant, the registration number, the name of the employer, and that they are supervised by a licensed person). It also specifies that the abbreviation "AMFT" not be used unless the term "registered associate marriage and family therapist" also appears in the advertisement.

Every requirement contained in BPC §4980.44(b) is already contained in the advertising regulations (§1811) except for one: the requirement that they disclose in the advertisement that they are supervised by a licensed person. That requirement has been added to the advertising regulations in 16 CCR §1811, where it will apply to all associates, not just AMFTs. Therefore, all of §4980.44(b) is obsolete and is being struck, and the same advertising requirements will now apply uniformly to all associates.

2. Statute for Trainees/Interns (Attachment 2)

- **BPC §4980.48(a)** covers client disclosure requirements for MFT trainees. It requires that MFT trainees inform each client that they are an unlicensed trainee, provide the name of their employer, and indicate what type of licensee is supervising them. The subdivision, which is much more detailed in its requirements than the comparable statutes for social work interns and PCC trainees, states the following:

BPC §4980.48(a) A trainee shall, prior to performing any professional services, inform each client or patient that the trainee is an unlicensed marriage and family therapist trainee, provide the name of the trainee's employer, and indicate whether the trainee is under the supervision of a licensed marriage and family therapist, a licensed clinical social worker, a licensed professional clinical counselor, a licensed psychologist, a licensed physician certified in psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, or a licensed educational psychologist.

In contrast, here are the comparable statutes discussing what social work interns and PCC trainees must disclose:

For social work interns: 16 CCR §1880 An unlicensed person employed under Section 4996.15 of the Code to perform limited social work functions shall inform each patient or client prior to performing any such functions that he or she is not a licensed clinical social worker and is under the supervision of a licensed

clinical social worker, marriage and family therapist, licensed professional clinical counselor, or a licensed psychologist or a licensed psychiatrist, whichever is applicable.

For PCC trainees: BPC §4999.36(d) A clinical counselor trainee shall inform each client or patient, prior to performing any professional services, that he or she is unlicensed and under supervision.

Revisions to BPC §4980.48(a), 4996.15, and 4999.36 are shown in **Attachment 2**. The revisions do the following:

- Require trainees to inform each client of the following prior to performing services:
 - That they are unlicensed;
 - That they are under supervision. (MFT trainees only – that they are under supervision of a licensed professional)
 - The name of their employer or entity for which they volunteer.
 - For social workers: strike the client disclosure requirement in regulations and move it to statute, consistent with LMFT and LPCC statute. Remove the requirement in regulations that a social work intern inform their client that they are under the supervision of a licensee. Unlike MFT trainees who count pre-degree hours and therefore must have a licensed supervisor, social work interns do not count pre-degree hours, and therefore the Board has no authority to require them to be supervised by a licensee.
- **BPC §4980.48(b) and (c)** specify additional information that must be contained in an MFT trainee's advertisement.

MFT and PCC trainees, and social work interns, are not included in the advertising regulations, because they are not registered with the Board and therefore not technically under its jurisdiction yet. However, unlike PCC trainees and social work interns, MFT trainees can count pre-degree hours toward licensure, which means that the Board has more purview over them than other types of pre-licensed students, because the Board sets criteria they need to meet in order for their pre-degree hours to count. Therefore, staff believes that it is appropriate to have a section in statute for MFT trainees outlining some basic advertising requirements.

Staff has consolidated the language in §4980.48(b) and (c) as follows (**Attachment 2**):

- Removed the requirement that MFT trainee advertisements must contain the supervisor's license designation and license number.

Instead, require that an advertisement for an MFT trainee must contain:

- Their name
- That they are an MFT trainee
- The name of their employer or entity for which they volunteer.
- That they are supervised by a licensed person.

Final Step: Strike 16 CCR §1880 (Attachment 3)

Once the statutory amendments shown in **Attachments 1** and **2** are complete, the next and final step to complete this project will be to delete 16 CCR §1880 (**Attachment 3**) in regulations via a Section 100 regulation change.

Summary of Proposed Changes

Charts 1 and **2** summarize the current and proposed advertising requirements, respectively.

Charts 3 and **4** summarize the current and proposed client disclosure requirements, respectively.

Recommendation

The Board already approved the language shown in **Attachments 1, 2, and 3** at its September 20, 2024 meeting. No action is needed unless the Board has new concerns or wishes to make additional changes.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Statute Changes for Associates

Attachment 2: Statute Changes for Trainees and Interns

Attachment 3: Regulation Changes for Social Work Interns

Chart 1: Current Advertising Requirements

Chart 2: Proposed Advertising Requirements

Chart 3: Current Client Disclosure Requirements

Chart 4: Proposed Client Disclosure Requirements

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ATTACHMENT 1
STATUTE CHANGES FOR ASSOCIATES

AMEND BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS CODE (BPC) §4980.44.

~~An associate marriage and family therapist employed under this chapter shall comply with the following requirements:~~

~~(a) Inform All applicants and registrants shall inform~~ each client or patient prior to performing initiating any mental health and related services that the person is ~~an unlicensed registered associate marriage and family therapist, provide the person's registration number and the name of the person's employer, and indicate whether the person is under the supervision of a licensed marriage and family therapist, licensed clinical social worker, licensed professional clinical counselor, psychologist licensed pursuant to Chapter 6.6 (commencing with Section 2900), licensed educational psychologist, or a licensed physician and surgeon certified in psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.~~ unlicensed, provide the name of their employer or if not employed, the name of the entity for which they volunteer, and that they are under the supervision of a licensed professional.

~~(b) (1) Any advertisement by or on behalf of a registered associate marriage and family therapist shall include, at a minimum, all of the following information:~~

~~(A) That the person is a registered associate marriage and family therapist.~~

~~(B) The associate's registration number.~~

~~(C) The name of the person's employer.~~

~~(D) That the person is supervised by a licensed person.~~

~~(2) The abbreviation "AMFT" shall not be used in an advertisement unless the title "registered associate marriage and family therapist" appears in the advertisement.~~

AMEND BPC §4996.18.

(a) Except as provided in subdivision (b) of Section 4996.23, an applicant shall have an active registration with the board as an associate clinical social worker in order to gain hours of supervised experience. The application shall be made on a form prescribed by the board.

(b) An applicant for registration shall satisfy the following requirements:

(1) Possess a master's degree from an accredited school or department of social work.

(2) Not be subject to denial of licensure pursuant to Section 480.

(3) Have completed training or coursework, which may be embedded within more than one course, in California law and professional ethics for clinical social workers. The coursework shall be taken from an accredited school or department of social work, a school, college, or university accredited by a regional or national institutional accrediting agency that is recognized by the United States Department of Education, a school, college, or university that is approved by the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education, or from a continuing education provider that is acceptable to the board, as defined in Section 4996.22. Undergraduate coursework shall not satisfy this requirement. The coursework shall include instruction in all of the following areas of study:

(A) Contemporary professional ethics and statutes, regulations, and court decisions that delineate the scope of practice of clinical social work.

(B) The therapeutic, clinical, and practical considerations involved in the legal and ethical practice of clinical social work, including, but not limited to, family law.

(C) The current legal patterns and trends in the mental health professions.

(D) The psychotherapist-patient privilege, confidentiality, dangerous patients, and the treatment of minors with and without parental consent.

(E) A recognition and exploration of the relationship between a practitioner's sense of self and human values, and the practitioner's professional behavior and ethics.

(F) The application of legal and ethical standards in different types of work settings.

(G) Licensing law and process.

(c) An applicant who possesses a master's degree from a school or department of social work that is a candidate for accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education shall be eligible, and, except as provided in subdivision (b) of Section 4996.23, shall be required to register as an associate clinical social worker in order to gain experience toward licensure if the applicant is not subject to denial of licensure pursuant to Section 480. That applicant shall not, however, be eligible to take the clinical examination until the school or department of social work has received accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education.

(d) An applicant who possesses a master's degree from an accredited school or department of social work shall be able to apply experience the applicant obtained

during the time the accredited school or department was in candidacy status by the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education toward the licensure requirements, if the experience meets the requirements of Section 4996.23. This subdivision shall apply retroactively to persons who possess a master's degree from an accredited school or department of social work and who obtained experience during the time the accredited school or department was in candidacy status by the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education.

(e) An applicant for registration or licensure trained in an educational institution outside the United States shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the board that the applicant possesses a master's of social work degree that is equivalent to a master's degree issued from a school or department of social work that is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education. These applicants shall provide the board with a comprehensive evaluation of the degree and shall provide any other documentation the board deems necessary. The board has the authority to make the final determination as to whether a degree meets all requirements, including, but not limited to, course requirements regardless of evaluation or accreditation.

(f) All applicants for licensure and registrants shall be at all times under the supervision of a supervisor who shall be responsible for ensuring that the extent, kind, and quality of counseling performed is consistent with the training and experience of the person being supervised and who shall be responsible to the board for compliance with all laws governing the practice of clinical social work.

(g) All applicants and registrants shall inform each client or patient before performing initiating any professional services that the applicant or registrant is unlicensed, provide the name of their employer or if not employed, the name of the entity for which they volunteer, and that they are ~~and is~~ under the supervision of a licensed professional.

AMEND BPC §4999.46.1.

(a) An associate or applicant for licensure shall be under the supervision of a supervisor at all times.

(b) An associate shall ~~do both of the following:~~

~~(1) Inform each client, before performing any professional services, that the associate is unlicensed and under supervision.~~

~~(2) Renew~~ renew the registration a maximum of five times. A registration shall not be renewed or reinstated beyond six years from the last day of the month during which it was issued, regardless of whether it has been revoked.

~~(c)~~ When no further renewals are possible, an applicant may apply for and obtain a subsequent associate registration number if the applicant meets the educational requirements for a subsequent associate registration number and has passed the California law and ethics examination. An applicant issued a subsequent associate registration number shall not be employed or volunteer in a private practice.

(c) All applicants and registrants shall inform each client or patient before initiating any professional services that the applicant or registrant is unlicensed, provide the name of their employer or if not employed, the name of the entity for which they volunteer, and that they are under the supervision of a licensed professional.

ATTACHMENT 2 STATUTE CHANGES FOR TRAINEES AND INTERNS

AMEND BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS CODE (BPC) §4980.48

(a) A trainee shall, prior to performing initiating any professional services, inform each client or patient that the trainee is ~~an unlicensed marriage and family therapist trainee, that they are under the supervision of a licensed professional, and provide the name of the trainee's~~ their employer or if not employed, the name of the entity for which they volunteer. ; ~~and indicate whether the trainee is under the supervision of a licensed marriage and family therapist, a licensed clinical social worker, a licensed professional clinical counselor, a licensed psychologist, a licensed physician certified in psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, or a licensed educational psychologist.~~

~~(b) Any person that advertises services performed by a trainee shall include the trainee's name, the supervisor's license designation or abbreviation, and the supervisor's license number.~~

~~(c)~~(b) Any advertisement by or on behalf of a marriage and family therapist trainee shall include, at a minimum, all of the following information:

(1) The trainee's name.

~~(1)~~(2) That the trainee is a marriage and family therapist trainee.

~~(2)~~(3) The name of the trainee's employer or if not employed, the name of the entity for which they volunteer.

~~(3)~~(4) That the trainee is supervised by a licensed person.

AMEND BPC §4996.15

(a) Nothing in this article shall restrict or prevent psychosocial activities by employees of accredited academic institutions, public schools, government agencies, or nonprofit institutions who train graduate students pursuing a master's degree in social work in an accredited college or university. Any psychosocial activities by the employee shall be part of a supervised course of study and the graduate students shall be designated by titles such as social work interns, social work trainees, or other titles clearly indicating the training status appropriate to their level of training. The term "social work intern," however, shall be reserved for persons enrolled in a master's or doctoral training program in social work in an accredited school or department of social work.

(b) A person practicing pursuant to subdivision (a) shall, prior to initiating any professional services, inform each client or patient that they are unlicensed, that they are under supervision, and provide the name of their employer or if not employed, the name of the entity for which they volunteer.

~~(b)~~(c) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), a graduate student shall not perform clinical social work in a private practice or a professional corporation.

AMEND BPC §4999.36.

(a) A clinical counselor trainee may perform activities and services provided that the activities and services constitute part of the clinical counselor trainee's supervised course of study and that the person is designated by the title "clinical counselor trainee."

(b) All practicum and field study hours gained as a clinical counselor trainee shall be coordinated between the school and the site where hours are being accrued. The school shall approve each site and shall have a written agreement with each site that details each party's responsibilities, including the methods by which supervision shall be provided. The agreement shall provide for regular progress reports and evaluations of the student's performance at the site.

(c) If an applicant has gained practicum and field study hours while enrolled in an institution other than the one that confers the qualifying degree, it shall be the applicant's responsibility to provide to the board satisfactory evidence that those practicum and field study hours were gained in compliance with this section.

(d) A clinical counselor trainee shall, ~~inform each client or patient,~~ prior to ~~performing~~ initiating any professional services, inform each client or patient that he or she is unlicensed and under supervision, the trainee is unlicensed, that they are under supervision, and provide the name of their employer or if not employed, the name of the entity for which they volunteer.

(e) No hours earned while a clinical counselor trainee may count toward the 3,000 hours of required postdegree supervised experience.

ATTACHMENT 3
REGULATION CHANGES FOR SOCIAL WORK INTERNS

STRIKE 16 CCR §1880 Unlicensed Assistants

~~An unlicensed person employed under Section 4996.15 of the Code to perform limited social work functions shall inform each patient or client prior to performing any such functions that he or she is not a licensed clinical social worker and is under the supervision of a licensed clinical social worker, marriage and family therapist, licensed professional clinical counselor, or a licensed psychologist or a licensed psychologist or a licensed psychiatrist, whichever is applicable.~~

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Chart 1

Current Advertising Requirements

Item Required to be Disclosed in an Advertisement	License Type				Registration Type			Pre-Degree Student		
	LMFT	LEP	LCSW	LPCC	AMFT	ASW	APCC	MFT Trainee	Social Work Intern	PCC Trainee
Full Name as Filed with the Board	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-
Complete Title or Acceptable Abbreviation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-
License or Registration Number	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-
Name of Employer or Volunteer Entity	-	-	-	-	X	X	X	X	-	-
Supervised by a Licensed Person	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	X	-	-
Supervisor's License Type and Number	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	-	-

Chart 2

Proposed Advertising Requirements

Item Required to be Disclosed in an Advertisement	License Type				Registration Type			Pre-Degree Student		
	LMFT	LEP	LCSW	LPCC	AMFT	ASW	APCC	MFT Trainee	Social Work Intern	PCC Trainee
Full Name as Filed with the Board	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X [1]	-	-
Complete Title or Acceptable Abbreviation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-
License or Registration Number	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-
Name of Employer or Volunteer Entity	-	-	-	-	X	X	X	X	-	-
Supervised by a Licensed Person	-	-	-	-	X	X	X	X	-	-
Supervisor's License Type and Number	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

[1] Under the proposal, MFT trainees would be required to include their name in an advertisement; however, they do not yet have a name filed with the Board.

Chart 3**Current Client Disclosure Requirements**

Item Required to be Disclosed to Client	Registration Type			Pre-Degree Student		
	AMFT	ASW	APCC	MFT Trainee	Social Work Intern	PCC Trainee
Unlicensed Status	X	X	X	X	X	X
Status Type (Associate, Trainee, Intern)	X	-	-	X	-	-
Registration Number	X	-	-	-	-	-
Name of Employer	X	-	-	X	-	-
Under Supervision	X	X [1]	X	X	X	X
License Type of Supervisor	X	-	-	X	X	-

[1] ASWs must specify they are under the supervision of a licensed person, but do not need to specify the supervisor's license type.

Chart 4**Proposed Client Disclosure Requirements**

	Registration Type			Pre-Degree Student		
	AMFT	ASW	APCC	MFT Trainee	Social Work Intern	PCC Trainee
Unlicensed Status	X	X	X	X	X	X
Status Type (Associate, Trainee, Intern)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Registration Number	-	-	-	-	-	-
Name of Employer or Volunteer Entity	X	X	X	X	X	X
Under Supervision of a Licensed Professional	X	X	X	X	X [1]	X [1]
License Type of Supervisor	-	-	-	-	-	-

[1] Social work interns and PCC trainees are not required to have a licensed professional supervise them, and therefore they only can be required to disclose that they are under supervision.