



Board of Behavioral Sciences



1625 North Market Blvd., Suite S-200
Sacramento, CA 95834
(916) 574-7830
www.bbs.ca.gov

Gavin Newsom, Governor
State of California

Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency
Department of Consumer Affairs

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

DATE

September 12, 2025

TIME

1:00 p.m.

LOCATIONS

Primary Location

Department of Consumer Affairs
Ruby Room
1747 N. Market Blvd., #182
Sacramento, CA 95834

Alternative Platform WebEx Video/Phone Conference

ATTENDEES

Members Present at Remote Locations

Dr. Annette Walker, Chair, Public Member
Dr. Nicholas Boyd, LPCC Member
Susan Friedman, Public Member
John Sovec, LMFT Member

Staff Present at Primary Location

Steve Sodergren, Executive Officer
Marlon McManus, Assistant Executive Officer
Marc Mason, Administration Manager
Syreeta Risso, Special Projects and Research Analyst
Christina Kitamura, Administration Analyst

Staff Present at Remote Locations

Sabina Knight, Legal Counsel
Shelley Ganaway, Legal Counsel

Other Attendees

Public participation via WebEx and in-person

1 **1. Call to Order and Establishment of Quorum**

2
3 Dr. Annette Walker, Chair of the Outreach and Education Committee
4 (Committee), called the meeting to order at 1:09 p.m. Roll was called, and a
5 quorum was established.
6

7 **2. Introductions**

8
9 Committee members introduced themselves during role call; staff and public
10 attendees introduced themselves.
11

12 **3. Consent Calendar: Discussion and Possible Approval of February 7, 2025,**
13 **Outreach and Education Committee Minutes**

14
15 Motion: Approve the February 7, 2025 Outreach and Education Committee
16 meeting minutes.
17

18 M/S: Friedman/Sovec
19

20 Public Comment: None
21

22 Motion carried: 4 yea, 0 nay

Member	Vote
Dr. Nicholas Boyd	Yes
Susan Friedman	Yes
John Sovec	Yes
Dr. Annette Walker	Yes

23
24 **4. Discussion and Possible Recommendations for Goals of the Committee**

25
26 The Committee reviewed its charge to:

- 27
 - Enhance educational resources for licensees and consumers.
 - Expand outreach efforts to connect with more diverse populations.
 - Strengthen engagement with schools, training programs, and consumers at public events.
 - Encourage broader stakeholder participation in Board meetings.

32

33 Committee members emphasized the need to break down the broader goals of
34 the Strategic Plan into more defined, actionable objectives. The following
35 preliminary objectives were identified during the discussion:

- 36
 - Conducting outreach efforts to high schoolers and undergraduates regarding the need for mental health therapists.
 - Identifying ways to measure the impact of the board's outreach efforts.
 - Identifying the audiences that the Board's outreach efforts should focus on.

40

- Ensuring that outreach efforts are accessible and increasing in person events.
- Increasing outreach to underserved communities.

Additionally, discussions in the Board's Workforce and Development Committee highlighted related objectives:

- Organize targeted outreach and listening sessions for educators, supervisors, and associates to address common licensure pathway concerns and gather ongoing feedback.
- Develop specific materials for supervisors that outline their responsibilities, supervision requirements, and best practices for supporting supervisees through the licensure process.
- Create a dedicated webpage and outreach campaign highlighting available grants and scholarships for individuals pursuing a career in mental health.
- Create outreach materials and organize outreach events for high schoolers and undergraduates to inform those considering a career in mental health.

Based upon these discussions, staff propose the following goals for the Committee:

- Expand current outreach efforts by hosting live events for educators, supervisors, and associates to address common licensure pathway concerns and gather ongoing feedback.
- Identify current outreach efforts or initiatives by other State and local agencies in reaching high school and undergraduates in underserved communities to increase awareness and encourage entry into the mental health profession and determine how the Board can support those efforts.
- Update the Board's website and outreach material to increase accessibility and expand on resources for individuals pursuing mental health careers.
- Strengthen outreach to educational institutions and students to promote understanding of the licensure pathway and legal obligations of practitioners.
- Develop strategies to reach the public and increase awareness of their rights as mental health consumers.

Discussion

Sovec:

- Revisited the topic of education and outreach for supervisors, which had also been discussed in previous meetings, but is not listed in the goals. Suggested that it be considered as a formal objective.
- Regarding Goal 1 ("Expand current outreach efforts by hosting live events"), recommendation was made to revise the goal to reflect "participate in and host" events. This would emphasize collaboration with other organizations (e.g., CAMFT, NASW events) and ensure the committee is actively engaging in existing opportunities, not solely creating its own.
- Revisited the topic of public awareness, which had been discussed during the previous meeting and questioned whether public education should be a core focus of the committee's work or if it would be more effectively handled by other state agencies with larger budgets.

Friedman: Asked which agencies are currently conducting outreach and education to consumers and stakeholders.

Sodergren:

- Acknowledged that many organizations across California are already conducting extensive public outreach on mental health topics, including its benefits and available resources.
- Due to limited resources, the committee should focus on its core goals while still maintaining a supportive role in public education.
- Suggestions included shifting focus toward consumer education, such as clarifying laws, expectations, and rights through existing Board publications (e.g., *Therapy Never Includes Sex, How to Find a Therapist*).
- Suggested repackaging these materials to improve accessibility and visibility, potentially through website updates or alternative formats.

Boyd:

- Emphasized the importance of creating a distinct goal focused specifically on supervisors, separate from the general licensure pathway concerns in Goal 1.
- Noted that the Board's website lacks a dedicated section for supervisors, making it difficult to locate relevant resources. Currently, supervisor information is embedded within each license type, which can be confusing.
- Recommended creating a centralized and clearly labeled space on the website for supervisor-specific materials, especially as efforts continue to promote and support individuals entering supervisory roles.

Sodergren:

- Reiterated the focus on dedicated outreach to supervisors, expressing strong support for prioritizing this effort within the committee's work.
- It was acknowledged that updating the Board's website to better serve supervisors will take time but is an important goal.

- The current supervisor-related content is difficult to locate, as it is embedded within license-specific sections. The idea of creating a more visible and centralized supervisor resource area on the website was supported.

Boyd: Suggested a more efficient approach to stakeholder engagement. Rather than attending individual university or organizational meetings, the proposal is for the Board to host centralized stakeholder roundtables—potentially twice a year—to invite all relevant stakeholders to participate. This approach could maximize impact while reducing the time and effort required for multiple individual outreach efforts. Noted that this idea is not currently reflected in the committee’s goals but could be a valuable addition.

Sodergren: Expressed support for hosting webcasted forums focused on specific topics, such as supervision, to engage stakeholders more effectively. These forums would serve dual purposes: providing accessible information and creating opportunities to gather feedback on emerging issues. Agreed that incorporating Board-hosted events into future tasks would be beneficial and aligns with the committee’s outreach goals.

Sovec: Revisited an earlier conversation about the importance of establishing metrics to evaluate outreach and engagement efforts. While some events have shown strong participation (e.g., high attendance and follow-up inquiries), there is currently no formal system in place to track or report these outcomes. Emphasized the need to include a goal focused on developing measurable metrics to assess impact, such as participant numbers, engagement levels, and follow-up actions.

Sodergren: Noted that metrics and audience feedback will be addressed in a later agenda item. Added that staff is not only focused on collecting participation data, but also on evaluating the usefulness of presentations and identifying what stakeholders want to hear from the Board. The goal is to refine messaging and outreach efforts to ensure they are meaningful and tailored to the needs of the audience.

Sovec:

- Recommended that the goal to “identify ways to measure the impact of the Board’s outreach efforts” be formally included in the committee’s stated goal list, emphasizing its importance in evaluating effectiveness.
- Highlighted the value of a dual approach to outreach: hosting larger events such as roundtables and listening sessions, while also engaging with smaller, localized audiences to give the Board a more personal and visible presence. This approach was supported by recent feedback survey results, which underscored the need for the Board to be more recognizable and accessible to stakeholders.

1 Walker: Affirmed that Walker and Sodergren discussed the points raised prior to
2 this meeting. Expressed appreciation for the feedback provided by committee
3 members.

4
5 Sara Carrasco, Jessup University: Expressed appreciation for the ongoing
6 partnership with the Board and emphasized their interest in continuing
7 collaborative efforts; offered to share invitations to upcoming events and
8 welcomed Board participation.

9
10 Bindu Mukkamala, California Division of the National Association of Social
11 Workers (NASW-CA): Expressed interest in partnering with the Board and
12 exploring potential collaboration opportunities; suggested that the Board could
13 support outreach initiatives, particularly during in-person events at social work
14 schools.

15
16 Shanti Ezrine, California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists
17 (CAMFT): Expressed interest in partnering on these initiatives. One area
18 highlighted for potential alignment is public outreach and awareness, particularly
19 in collaboration with other state entities. An example was provided involving the
20 Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI), which recently
21 certified over 3,000 wellness coaches and awarded scholarships to more than
22 600 students statewide. These coaches, often from underserved and diverse
23 communities, are entering the behavioral health workforce to provide non-clinical
24 services in schools and student settings. CAMFT suggested this group could be
25 a strong target for outreach, as many may be interested in pursuing licensure.

26
27 Sr. Jasmine Smith, NASW-CA: Appreciation was expressed to the Board for
28 participating in NASW's recent "Lunch and Learn" sessions, which have been
29 beneficial to members. There is strong interest in continuing these opportunities,
30 whether in person or virtually, and in supporting the Board's initiatives and
31 community efforts.

32 33 **5. Discussion and Possible Recommendation on Artificial Intelligence** 34 **Listening Session**

35
36 Staff proposed holding the first Board's listening session in November 2025, with
37 the goal of gathering diverse perspectives on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)
38 in the delivery of mental health services.

39
40 The proposed session would include a panel of representatives from professional
41 associations such as:

- 42 • California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (CAMFT)
- 43 • National Association of Social Workers, California Division (NASW-CA)
- 44 • California Association of Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors
- 45 (CALPCC)
- 46 • California Association of School Psychologists (CASP)

1 The purpose of the session is to:

- 2 • Explore how AI is currently being utilized in mental health practice
- 3 • Identify potential benefits and risks for practitioners
- 4 • Discuss ethical considerations
- 5 • Gather input on the types of safeguards or guidance that may be needed.

6
7 Discussion

8 Questions were raised that were not related to the specific agenda item.

9
10 Sovec: Recommended potential future topics for listening sessions: 1)
11 supervision, 2) the movement of psychedelic assistance therapy.

12
13 Public Comment

14 Joshua, MFT graduate student: Posed questions that were off-topic and not
15 related to the specific agenda item.

16
17 Joshua, MFT graduate student: Asked how recommendations from the AI
18 listening session will be disseminated.

19
20 Risso, BBS staff, shared that the listening sessions will be recorded and made
21 available on the BBS website. She reiterated that the purpose of these sessions
22 is to amplify concerns and provide a space for questions. It was noted that there
23 may be a series of such sessions moving forward.

24
25 Dr. Ben Caldwell: Expressed appreciation to the committee for considering the
26 implementation of listening sessions. Noted that traditional board meetings can
27 be lengthy, making it difficult for clinicians to participate. Supported the idea of
28 narrowly focused listening sessions, which have proven effective in other states
29 for increasing stakeholder engagement. Such sessions would allow for
30 meaningful exchanges about current professional issues. Offered to assist in the
31 development of these sessions.

32
33 Shanti Ezrine, CAMFT: Appreciation was expressed to staff and the committee
34 for hosting the listening session. CAMFT shared that they are currently updating
35 their Code of Ethics to address the use of technology and AI. CAMFT has been
36 gathering member feedback through surveys to better understand usage patterns
37 and concerns. CAMFT offered to participate in future panels and contribute
38 insights based on member input.

39
40 Bindu Mukkamala, NASW-CA: Expressed interest in participating in the ongoing
41 discussion, particularly around the implications of AI on consumer protection and
42 confidentiality. They noted that their national organization is currently updating its
43 Code of Ethics to reflect these concerns.

6. Discussion and Possible Recommendation on Social Media Outreach

Staff provided an update on the Board's previous "Facebook Fridays" initiative, which began in 2020. These events featured brief, live presentations by Board staff on topics such as licensure requirements, application processing times, and other licensure-related guidance. The sessions were interactive, allowing real-time questions from viewers and fostering greater transparency and engagement.

The events were well-received and highly successful. However, due to staffing constraints and the need to prioritize core operational functions, the Board discontinued the live sessions.

Staff reported ongoing coordination efforts to resume interactive online events and are currently evaluating alternative mediums to maximize accessibility, reliability, and audience engagement.

Discussion

Friedman: Asked whether the Board feels it is reaching its full potential audience through social media or if there may be gaps in outreach and engagement.

Sodergren: Clarified that social media is just one method of communication used to engage stakeholders. In addition to social media, staff also participate in outreach presentations and events. Social media, however, is noted for its speed and broad reach in disseminating information.

Public Comments

Shanti Ezrine, CAMFT: Thanked staff for resuming the online events for members and the public. Asked how these events will be announced, noting that CAMFT would be happy to help amplify and share them on social media. It would be helpful to know the announcement channels so they can distribute accordingly.

Marc Mason, BBS staff: Responded that events will be announced on BBS' social media pages and the newsletter, and staff can reach out directly to CAMFT as well.

Dr. Lisa Wenninger, LPCC: Expressed appreciation for the revival of Facebook Fridays. Noted that not everyone uses Facebook, and suggested the use of Zoom or other platforms that do not require an account.

Mason, BBS staff: Stated that staff is exploring other mediums.

7. Update on Website Redesign

Board staff are working with the Department of Consumer Affairs' Office of Information Services (OIS) to reorganize and improve the BBS website. The goal is to enhance user experience, accessibility, and ease of navigation.

The proposed website changes include:

- Renaming the 'About Us' tab to 'Consumers'
- Renaming the current 'Consumers' tab to 'Enforcement'
- Replacing the 'Resources' tab with a new 'Online Services' tab
- Redistributing existing content to more appropriate sections

New features will include:

- A 'Popular Links' section on the homepage, based on user activity
- A 'Quick Hits' section with direct links to frequently accessed information

Staff will continue working with OIS to improve the website's navigational structure and ensure the website is more user-friendly.

Discussion

Boyd: Reiterated his earlier proposal to add a supervisor tab.

Public Comment

Bindu Mukkamala, NASW-CA: Shared feedback from NASW-CA members, highlighting two frequently asked questions:

1. How out-of-state applicants can become licensed clinical social workers in California, with noted difficulties navigating the website for this information.
2. Clarification around continuing education units, including which courses are required and which qualify.

Suggested that the Board consider implementing an AI chatbot on the website to help users find answers to common questions. While not always perfectly accurate, such tools are increasingly used on other websites and could provide helpful guidance.

Shanti Ezrine, CAMFT:

- Expressed appreciation in reorganizing and restructuring the BBS website, and specifically praised the relabeling of sections, such as changing "Consumers" to "Enforcement," which improves clarity and access to relevant information.
- Highlighted features they hope will be maintained, including the Facebook-linked application timeline, which is frequently referenced by members and staff. CAMFT emphasized its value and suggested it remain prominently accessible on the homepage.

- Noted that forms, law updates, and pre-licensure information that CAMFT commonly refers to its members can be difficult to locate. Recommended including direct links to these resources in the proposed “Quick Hits” section of the website.

8. Update on Outreach Events

As of August 27, 2025, Board staff have participated in 37 outreach events during the 2025 calendar year. These included virtual presentations to educational institutions on registration and licensure processes, as well as sessions with county agencies and professional associations covering supervision, registration, and licensure topics.

Staff also resumed collaboration with NASW-CA through “Lunch n’ Learn” events and participated in NASW-CA Lobby Days in April 2025.

Ongoing engagement continues through participation in MFT consortium meetings across the state.

In May 2025, staff released a graduation season video on YouTube, providing updates on education requirements, licensure processes, and Board initiatives. Similar videos are planned annually, along with additional content to support students, educators, and licensees.

Staff will work with the DCA SOLID unit to develop a standardized survey for outreach event participants to gather feedback and improve outreach efforts. To better assess impact, staff will also enhance attendance tracking.

Discussion

Boyd: Asked how outreach efforts are currently being communicated, particularly with universities.

Staff shared that outreach is currently coordinated through a dedicated email address. Interested parties can contact the Board via this email to request participation in events.

Staff also acknowledged the need to be more proactive in targeting key audiences, particularly educational institutions. Currently, outreach involves advertising available presentations and sharing a video resource inviting schools to engage. While efforts like newsletter promotion exist, staff noted opportunities to strengthen partnerships—such as working with NASW to reach the Council on Social Work Education. They emphasized the importance of more targeted promotion.

Boyd: Agreed with the need for improved outreach and noted that low response rates to Board surveys are likely due to lack of awareness, not lack of interest.

1 Suggested the Board explore options such as creating a portal or email
2 distribution list where individuals can opt in to receive updates. Emphasized that
3 relying on individuals to seek out information from the Board results in low
4 engagement. He proposed exploring systems like BreZE or other tools to
5 facilitate direct communication and increase stakeholder participation.
6

7 Staff shared that a listserv was recently created to better target communications
8 to known educational institutions and contacts. While it's not yet fully utilized, it
9 offers potential for more direct outreach. Staff also noted plans to collaborate with
10 associations to identify additional institutions. Additionally, staff is considering
11 making presentation materials available on its website. This would allow
12 educators to access structured content for classroom or staff use, even if a live
13 presentation is not requested—while still encouraging live participation when
14 possible.
15

16 Friedman: Suggested that future outreach videos feature licensed therapists
17 who reflect the diversity and age range of the target audience, such as younger
18 professionals and people of color, to increase relatability and engagement—
19 especially among students. Noted that the information being shared is often
20 complex and specific, and recommended sending printed materials via the
21 listserv to reach a broader audience more efficiently.
22

23 Staff noted that while travel for outreach is possible, it must be balanced with
24 available resources and audience size. Association events like NASW and
25 CAMFT are valuable for reaching pre-licensees and are typically worth attending
26 in person.
27

28 Staff referenced a past USC-hosted event that successfully brought together
29 multiple schools and expressed interest in similar opportunities. Currently, most
30 outreach is conducted virtually, but staff is exploring scalable options, such as
31 recording presentations internally and making them available on the website for
32 broader access.
33

34 Staff noted that efforts are also underway to strengthen connections with
35 educational institutions to increase awareness and engagement with the Board's
36 outreach offerings.
37

38 Sovec: Noted that the Executive Officer's quarterly report includes pass rates for
39 all schools in the state. Suggested this report could be a potential source for
40 gathering school contact information. Proposed using that data to reach out to
41 schools with a message such as to ask if the school would like to host a
42 workshop.
43

44 Staff confirmed they already have contact information for approximately 90% of
45 the schools listed in the Executive Officer's quarterly report. Noted that frequent

1 changes in school administration make it challenging to keep contact lists
2 current.

3
4 Sovec: Suggested repurposing the Spring 2025 graduation video by segmenting
5 it into shorter clips focused on specific topics (e.g., proof of completed
6 coursework). Proposed sharing the segmented clips across social media
7 platforms like Instagram and Facebook to make the content more accessible and
8 engaging.

9
10 Public Comment

11 Bindu Mukkamala, NASW-CA: Thanked Board staff for their participation in
12 NASW's "Lunch and Learn" events and the April Lobby Day. Extended an
13 invitation to the Board to attend their upcoming Lobby Day in April 2026.
14 Announced their annual conference will be held November 14-15, 2025, in Irvine.

15
16 Shanti Ezrine, CAMFT: Thanked Board staff for their participation in various
17 outreach events. Specifically acknowledged involvement in CAMFT-sponsored
18 events, including the Fall Symposium and Annual Conference, chapter events,
19 and MFT Consortium meetings.

20
21 Dr. Ben Caldwell: Expressed appreciation to the committee and Board staff and
22 thanked the Board for not only setting policy but also for effectively
23 communicating those policies to impacted individuals.

24
25 **9. Suggestions for Future Agenda items**

26
27 None

28
29 **10. Public Comment for Items not on the Agenda**

30
31 Christy Berger: Invited ideas for future articles and welcomed contributions from
32 interested individuals and provided her email address verbally:

33 Christy.Berger@dca.ca.gov

34
35 **11. Adjournment**

36
37 The Committee adjourned at 3:04 p.m.