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Gavin Newsom, Governor  
State of California

Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency  
Department of Consumer Affairs

## 1 OUTREACH AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

## 2

## 3

4 **DATE** September 12, 2025

5 **TIME** 1:00 p.m.

### 6 **LOCATIONS**

7 **Primary Location** Department of Consumer Affairs  
8 Ruby Room  
9 1747 N. Market Blvd., #182  
10 Sacramento, CA 95834

11 **Alternative Platform** WebEx Video/Phone Conference

### 12 **ATTENDEES**

#### 13 **Members Present at Remote Locations**

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

#### 18 **Staff Present at Primary Location**

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

#### 24 **Staff Present at Remote Locations**

25 Sabina Knight, Legal Counsel  
26 Shelley Ganaway, Legal Counsel

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

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

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

1           • Ensuring that outreach efforts are accessible and increasing in person  
2           events.  
3           • Increasing outreach to underserved communities.  
4

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

7           • Organize targeted outreach and listening sessions for educators,  
8           supervisors, and associates to address common licensure pathway  
9           concerns and gather ongoing feedback.  
10  
11           • Develop specific materials for supervisors that outline their responsibilities,  
12           supervision requirements, and best practices for supporting supervisees  
13           through the licensure process.  
14  
15           • Create a dedicated webpage and outreach campaign highlighting  
16           available grants and scholarships for individuals pursuing a career in  
17           mental health.  
18  
19           • Create outreach materials and organize outreach events for high  
20           schoolers and undergraduates to inform those considering a career in  
21           mental health.  
22

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

25           • Expand current outreach efforts by hosting live events for educators,  
26           supervisors, and associates to address common licensure pathway  
27           concerns and gather ongoing feedback.  
28  
29           • Identify current outreach efforts or initiatives by other State and local  
30           agencies in reaching high school and undergraduates in underserved  
31           communities to increase awareness and encourage entry into the mental  
32           health profession and determine how the Board can support those efforts.  
33  
34           • Update the Board's website and outreach material to increase accessibility  
35           and expand on resources for individuals pursuing mental health careers.  
36  
37           • Strengthen outreach to educational institutions and students to promote  
38           understanding of the licensure pathway and legal obligations of  
39           practitioners.  
40  
41           • Develop strategies to reach the public and increase awareness of their  
42           rights as mental health consumers.  
43

44           Discussion

45           Sovec:

1           • Revisited the topic of education and outreach for supervisors, which had  
2           also been discussed in previous meetings, but is not listed in the goals.  
3           Suggested that it be considered as a formal objective.  
4           • Regarding Goal 1 ("Expand current outreach efforts by hosting live  
5           events"), recommendation was made to revise the goal to reflect  
6           "participate in and host" events. This would emphasize collaboration with  
7           other organizations (e.g., CAMFT, NASW events) and ensure the  
8           committee is actively engaging in existing opportunities, not solely creating  
9           its own.  
10           • Revisited the topic of public awareness, which had been discussed during  
11           the previous meeting and questioned whether public education should be  
12           a core focus of the committee's work or if it would be more effectively  
13           handled by other state agencies with larger budgets.  
14

15           Friedman: Asked which agencies are currently conducting outreach and  
16           education to consumers and stakeholders.  
17

18           Sodergren:

19           • Acknowledged that many organizations across California are already  
20           conducting extensive public outreach on mental health topics, including its  
21           benefits and available resources.  
22           • Due to limited resources, the committee should focus on its core goals  
23           while still maintaining a supportive role in public education.  
24           • Suggestions included shifting focus toward consumer education, such as  
25           clarifying laws, expectations, and rights through existing Board  
26           publications (e.g., *Therapy Never Includes Sex, How to Find a Therapist*).  
27           • Suggested repackaging these materials to improve accessibility and  
28           visibility, potentially through website updates or alternative formats.  
29

30           Boyd:

31           • Emphasized the importance of creating a distinct goal focused specifically  
32           on supervisors, separate from the general licensure pathway concerns in  
33           Goal 1.  
34           • Noted that the Board's website lacks a dedicated section for supervisors,  
35           making it difficult to locate relevant resources. Currently, supervisor  
36           information is embedded within each license type, which can be  
37           confusing.  
38           • Recommended creating a centralized and clearly labeled space on the  
39           website for supervisor-specific materials, especially as efforts continue to  
40           promote and support individuals entering supervisory roles.  
41

42           Sodergren:

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

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

5  
6           Boyd: Suggested a more efficient approach to stakeholder engagement. Rather  
7            than attending individual university or organizational meetings, the proposal is for  
8            the Board to host centralized stakeholder roundtables—potentially twice a year—  
9            to invite all relevant stakeholders to participate. This approach could maximize  
10            impact while reducing the time and effort required for multiple individual outreach  
11            efforts. Noted that this idea is not currently reflected in the committee's goals but  
12            could be a valuable addition.

13  
14           Sodergren: Expressed support for hosting webcasted forums focused on specific  
15            topics, such as supervision, to engage stakeholders more effectively. These  
16            forums would serve dual purposes: providing accessible information and creating  
17            opportunities to gather feedback on emerging issues. Agreed that incorporating  
18            Board-hosted events into future tasks would be beneficial and aligns with the  
19            committee's outreach goals.

20  
21           Sovec: Revisited an earlier conversation about the importance of establishing  
22            metrics to evaluate outreach and engagement efforts. While some events have  
23            shown strong participation (e.g., high attendance and follow-up inquiries), there is  
24            currently no formal system in place to track or report these outcomes.  
25           Emphasized the need to include a goal focused on developing measurable  
26            metrics to assess impact, such as participant numbers, engagement levels, and  
27            follow-up actions.

28  
29           Sodergren: Noted that metrics and audience feedback will be addressed in a  
30            later agenda item. Added that staff is not only focused on collecting participation  
31            data, but also on evaluating the usefulness of presentations and identifying what  
32            stakeholders want to hear from the Board. The goal is to refine messaging and  
33            outreach efforts to ensure they are meaningful and tailored to the needs of the  
34            audience.

35  
36           Sovec:  
37            • Recommended that the goal to “identify ways to measure the impact of the  
38            Board’s outreach efforts” be formally included in the committee’s stated  
39            goal list, emphasizing its importance in evaluating effectiveness.  
40            • Highlighted the value of a dual approach to outreach: hosting larger  
41            events such as roundtables and listening sessions, while also engaging  
42            with smaller, localized audiences to give the Board a more personal and  
43            visible presence. This approach was supported by recent feedback survey  
44            results, which underscored the need for the Board to be more  
45            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  
43  
44  
45  
46

- California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (CAMFT)
- National Association of Social Workers, California Division (NASW-CA)
- California Association of Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors  
(CALPCC)
- 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
- Identify potential benefits and risks for practitioners
- Discuss ethical considerations
- Gather input on the types of safeguards or guidance that may be needed.

7 Discussion

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

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

13 Public Comment

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

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

20 Rissso, 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.

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.

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.

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.

1       **6. Discussion and Possible Recommendation on Social Media Outreach**

2

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

9

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

13

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

17

18       Discussion

19

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

22

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

27       Public Comments

28

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

34

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

38

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

42

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

1      **7. Update on Website Redesign**

2  
3      Board staff are working with the Department of Consumer Affairs' Office of  
4      Information Services (OIS) to reorganize and improve the BBS website. The goal  
5      is to enhance user experience, accessibility, and ease of navigation.

6  
7      The proposed website changes include:

8            • Renaming the 'About Us' tab to 'Consumers'  
9            • Renaming the current 'Consumers' tab to 'Enforcement'  
10           • Replacing the 'Resources' tab with a new 'Online Services' tab  
11           • Redistributing existing content to more appropriate sections

12  
13      New features will include:

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

16  
17      Staff will continue working with OIS to improve the website's navigational  
18      structure and ensure the website is more user-friendly.

19  
20      Discussion

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

22  
23      Public Comment

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

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

30  
31      Suggested that the Board consider implementing an AI chatbot on the website to  
32      help users find answers to common questions. While not always perfectly  
33      accurate, such tools are increasingly used on other websites and could provide  
34      helpful guidance.

35  
36      Shanti Ezrine, CAMFT:

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

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

5

6       **8. Update on Outreach Events**

7

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

13

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

16

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

19

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

24

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

28

29       Discussion

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

32

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

36

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

44

45       Boyd: Agreed with the need for improved outreach and noted that low response  
46          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 BreEZe 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 None  
27

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

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](mailto:Christy.Berger@dca.ca.gov)

35 **11. Adjournment**

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