

**Board of Professional Counselors & Therapists
Board Meeting Open Session – April 17, 2026
10:30AM - Transcript**

Attendees

Board Members	Board Staff
Elizabeth Guroff, MA, LCMFT	Alexandria Langston, Manager Licensing
Ingrid Mazziotta, LCADC	Breya Graves, Compliance Assistant
Karen Katrinic, MS, LCMFT	Janice Isaac, Coordinator Licensing
Kimberly Poole-Sykes, LCPC	Katrina Hunter, Licensing Assistant
Lisa Connors, Ph.D., LCPC	Myisha Maybin, Compliance Investigator
Mary Blackwood, LCMFT	Olanrewaju Adebona, Licensing Assistant
Sharita Sivels-Stevens, Board Chair, LCPC	Sandra Boxley, Coordinator Licensing
Stacey Nelson, LCPC, LCPAT, ATR-BC	Sharon Rendon-Hoyt, Administrative Specialist
Winnie Moore, LCPC	Shelly-Ann Barnes, Manager Compliance
	Wendy Morton, Compliance Investigator
Absent: Terri Johnson, LCADC	Tomiloba Olaniyi-Quadri, Executive Director
	Victoria Stinson, Deputy Director
	Trevor Smoot, Licensing Coordinator
	Lillian Reese, Legislative Liaison
	Melia N Ritchie, Board Counsel
	Rhonda Edwards, Board Counsel

Stakeholders and Members of the Public in attendance:

Amanda Link
 Anne McHugh
 Cynthia Chestnut
 Erin Schaller
 Samantha Hardesty, Sankofa Behavioral Health
 Zakiyyah Holmes

Meeting Called to Order at 10:33AM by Board Chair Sharita Sivels-Stephens

Call to Order the Open Session Meeting for April 17, 2026, which is offered virtually.

Statement of COMAR Regulation 10.01.14.02.02 - *The public attendance states except in instances when a public body expressly invites, public testimony, questions, comments or other forms of public participation or when public participation is otherwise authorized by law. A member of the public attending an open session may not participate in the session.*

Attendance Call by Board Chair

Sharita Sivels-Stevens
Ingrid Mazziotta
Kimberly Poole-Sykes
Karen Katrinic
Lisa Connors
Stacey Nelson
Mary Blackwood
Elizabeth Guroff
Winnie Moore

Absent

Terri Johnson

Board Chair acknowledges and notes the absence of 1 board member. The Board does have a quorum for today's Board meeting.

Review and Approve the Board Meeting Minutes from the March 20, 2026, BOPCT Open Board Meeting.

Motion to Approve
Motion is Second
No Oppositions
The Motion is Approved:

Review and Approve the Board Meeting Agenda for the April 17, 2026, Board Meeting,...

Motion to Approve
Motion is Second
No Oppositions
The Motion is Approved:

Board Member Elizabeth Guroff - Statement to amend the April Board Meeting Agenda to include under Legislative Committee updates on SB1483, but also HB 771 and HB1372, as well as our upcoming sunset bill.

Motion to Approve Agenda with Amendments

Motion Seconded by

No Oppositions

Motion to approve with amendments to agenda for April Board Meeting Minutes

Board Chair Report

The Chair announced the addition of a new member to the Behavioral Analyst Advisory Committee (BAAC): They have a new member her name is Amanda Link who expressed excitement of being a part of the advisory committee.

Board Counsel Announcements & Reports

Announcement from Board Counsel - Earlier this month, the Supreme Court issued a decision in the case of Child versus Salazar. in this case, the court ruled that conversion therapy is protected speech under the First Amendment. and the board can no longer prosecute...because of this decision, the board can no longer prosecute complaints. regarding conversion therapy. So I just want the public to be aware of that.

Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director presented an amended budget outlining additional needed personnel spaces of the proposed relocation and reconfiguration of Board Staff office space. A prior Board decision approved relocation to a 5th-floor suite to accommodate expanded staffing needs.

The current proposal includes removal of existing fixtures and installation of cubicles with overhead storage. Estimated costs:

- \$62,000 (installation, storage, panel reupholstery for 12 workstations)
- \$8,000 (previously approved fixture removal)

Total estimated cost: \$70,000

Reported on workspace planning for the fifth-floor location. The Board previously approved approximately \$62,700 for 12 workstations; however, after reassessing staffing needs, including two recently hired administrative staff and two upcoming licensing manager positions—the original configuration was deemed insufficient. A revised proposal of approximately \$85,000 was obtained to support 16 workstations and accommodate future growth. Approval of the revised quote is being requested.

Motion to approve amended budget for Board staff office relocation

Motion Seconded to have discussion

Winnie Moore -BDCOMM-: A second.

We can open up to discussion. Any board members have any questions?

Winnie Moore - What's the timeline for the project?

Executive Director Response: They will begin dismantling the existing furniture as soon as I'm able to sign the documents. A timeline of 3 to 4 months should be completed because they have to break down the old configurations, take it away and then build our own and then it also has to set up everything else that will be able to help us to be able to actually use this.

Winnie Moore - one last question. Where are we at with the scanning of all the files and all of that?

Currently we have scanned all the DocuExplore files that we sent to them. So, the next step is to send those files to the archives. So, I just reached out to the archives to get information about the process. So, they've sent the information. Over the next couple of weeks, we will start working on sending them to the archives. And even the files that are in the current cabinet storage locker that we're going to lose, we want to verify if they have already scanned. If not, we'll do the scanning internally this time around because now we have extra administrative staff that can take that task on instead of sending it out.

Winnie Moore - Okay, one last question. As it relates to scanning documents, what is there a particular process like if a counselor requested a copy of their full entire file,...what is that process? indicated on the website how that could be done and what the request has to consist of? and then also how long would it take for them to receive that full completed file? because when you want to get licensed in other states sometimes that's what they're requiring because they don't have reciprocity with Maryland.

What we're doing is the process has not changed. We were trying to make sure that we don't take any applications away without already having them online. So, if we have them online and it is requested, we can as well just download them or email it to the applicant directly. So, it's still going to be the same process. And that's part of the reasons that we want to do the second set of scanning internally so that there is no time where we will say sorry we cannot access your file or it will all still be internal, so it doesn't stop anybody from being able to request their file at that point.

Board Chair: - Did any other board members have any questions? or...anything?

Hearing None. We are going to move to vote on the office relocation and workspace configuration new proposal....

All those in support, please respond by saying I.

All those Oppose, please say A

No opposition

Board Chair: Hearing none. That motion is carried. Motion Approved

Pilot Testing New e-Application System - We are looking to do a pilot testing for our new online system with a small group before the actual date that we plan to start with all the other application type. So we're looking to start in on the 1st of June with the LBA group to see how the system would work before we end up allowing every other person to start applying. So the date we said we'll stop taking paper applications is June 20.

That date has not changed but we're working with some of the associations associated with the LBA basically to see how we can do that pilot testing from June 1st up to the end of June and then by the beginning of July we'll be able to accommodate every other application type to start applying online. So that is just for informational purposes. More information about that will be provided on the website and we also intend to send an email blast to everyone and all the stakeholders to let them know that that is what we are doing.

Staffing Updates - We have hired two more administrative staffs. We have a new administrative assistant, and we have an executive assistant starting on Wednesday of next week. Over the next couple of weeks, we should be hiring two more licensing coordinators and one more investigator. So that way we'll be able to adequately clear the backlogs before we actually start taking online applications. The hope is that by the time we start online applications, we have enough staff to still divide between whatever backlogs that are left and the new applications that are coming in online.

Regulatory Subcommittee - This committee is going to review and recommend updates onto board regulations because we believe that there are some regulations that have become a little bit outdated and have also started slowing down our processes in terms of how we approve even review licenses. I have already sent out some invitations to board members that we hope will be part of this subcommittee, and the hope is that since the legislative session is over, we can start working on regulations we want to review or change ahead of the next legislative session. And the last thing is the town hall meetings.

Public Relations & Engagement - We had a meeting where we talked about the importance of improving our public relations and public engagement. So even though we have a stakeholder meeting that happens quarterly right now we are also looking to incorporate a town hall meeting, this one would not just be stakeholders like associations that we currently have. It would include every agency or any agency or anyone who just wants to ask questions or one thing or the other about board processes. More information about this would also be shared on the website and we also send an email blast about it to notify people.

What we want to do is at least for the first meeting is going to be after our online system goes live...because we know that people will probably have more questions to ask about the online system or whatever issues they encountering. So that will give us an opportunity to be able to attend to those issues and be able to hear people's feedback concerning the new system.

Legislative and Regulations (Legs & Regs) Updates

Reported that the 2026 legislative session has concluded, with three bills passed that impact the Board:

- **House Bill 1483** removes the temporary license requirement for out-of-state licensed clinical professional counselors providing telehealth services for continuity of care. Previously, providers could obtain a six-month temporary Maryland license to continue treating clients who relocated to Maryland. The new legislation expands the provision beyond college students and allows out-of-state providers to practice for up to six months without obtaining a Maryland license or Board oversight. Concerns were noted regarding

lack of jurisdiction and enforcement authority if complaints arise during that period. The bill is pending the Governor's signature.

- **House Bill 771** addresses human trafficking training and allows continuing education credits (CEUs) for training related to assisting victims of human trafficking. The training was already allowable for CEU credit; the bill primarily formalizes awareness efforts and aligns with broader Health Occupations Article initiatives.
- **House Bill 1372** establishes a commission to coordinate oversight among Maryland licensing boards. Initial legislation did not include Board representation, but revisions now allow participating boards to be determined later. Staff indicated the Board will advocate for representation due to the Board's size and scope of licensure oversight.

Legislative Concept Papers and Sunset Review

Reported that the Legislation and Regulations Committee is recommending development of two legislative concept papers for the next session:

1. **Telehealth Temporary License Proposal**
 - Recommendation to expand the six-month continuity-of-care provision to all Board license types while reinstating a requirement for a temporary Maryland license to ensure Board oversight and consumer protection.
2. **Board Sunset Legislation**
 - The Board is entering its sunset review process and must seek legislative reauthorization. The Board previously received only a two-year extension due to concerns regarding audits, application processing, and turnaround times. Staff noted operational improvements and plans to request a ten-year extension, though five years is more typical.

Board members were advised that draft concept papers will be distributed prior to the next Board meeting for review and approval to meet legislative drafting timelines.

Recommended Statutory and COMAR Updates

Staff reviewed proposed statutory and regulatory revisions to be included within the sunset legislation, including:

- Revising statutory language in §17-101 to define practice as providing "treatment or assessment" rather than requiring proof of both.
- Adding clearer definitions regarding the activities of professional counselors to strengthen enforcement authority against unlicensed or improper practice.
- Updating statutes (§17-301 and related sections) to reflect Board oversight of both clinical and non-clinical licenses, including graduate-level and trainee licenses.
- Clarifying supervision requirements for non-clinical practice.
- Revising §17-309 to remove the requirement that LG licenses be maintained only for a "limited period of time," allowing flexibility for individuals delayed by supervision, illness, or personal circumstances while maintaining supervision requirements.

- Reviewing COMAR educational requirements to align with nationally accredited professional credentialing organizations rather than requiring detailed course-by-course reviews, with the goal of modernizing standards and improving application processing efficiency.

Board members were informed that additional discussion and formal approval of the concept papers will occur at the next meeting.

Credentialing Committee

The Committee continues to meet monthly. Since March:

- **333 total applications received**
- Includes various licensure categories and 24 out-of-state applications
- 47 supervisor applications reviewed

Number of active credentials and the initial applications received from March to present.

Licensing Data

70 LGPC's

108 LCADC's

0 LGADC's

6 CAC

6 CSC AAD

44 ADTS

11 L MFT

3 LCPAT

1 LG PAT

79 LBA

So as of today the number of active credentials we have

7,538 LCPC

3,030 LG LCADC

28 LGAC

76 CAC AD

638 CCAD

962 AT

495 MFT

201 LCPAT

30 LG PAT

1,843 LBA

Total Active Credentials = 15,822 within this community

Report concluded.

Disciplinary Review Committee – Lisa Connors

The statistics from July 1st, 2025, to April 10th, 2026, are 233 closed cases. Since the beginning of 2026 have been a total of 286 cases. So, our committee continues to meet, and we continue to review cases.

Report concluded.

Counseling Compact Update

Wanted to inform everyone that the various committees are still continuing to meet to iron out all of the policies and procedures. We do want to let everyone know when Maryland does go live with offering privileges, the public will be notified.

Old Business

Board Counsel advised that the board has again started to meet with the alcohol and drug subcommittee. This is a statutory requirement for the board. Members of this committee are no longer with the Board. Therefore, the committee has been reconstituted, and we will be starting our meetings with some stakeholders next month.

Board Chair – Reminded Board and Board Staff to check out the quarterly newsletter that is located on the website to learn more about the Board and that we have for members as well as staff spotlights that we have for our staff members that are doing great job. The next meeting is scheduled for May the 15th, 2026 at 10:30 a.m.

Adjournment

The next Board Meeting is scheduled for **May 15, 2026, at 10:30 AM (virtual)**.

Motion to adjourn.

Motion to adjourn Seconded

No objections.

Motion carried.

The Open Session adjourned at **11:10 AM**. The Board then convened in closed session.

Meeting Duration: 40 minutes