



# MARYLAND Department of Health

Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists

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## 11 Things Your Board Has Accomplished Since December 2017 – A Letter from the Chair May 2019

In my February letter, I mentioned that I too had frustrating interactions with our Board prior to my appointment to serve on this Board. As Chair, a main part of my mission is to improve communication between the Board and you, the licensees; to increase transparency wherever possible; and to have clear and efficient processes for obtaining licensure, all in service of our joint mission to serve and protect the constituents of Maryland who seek our services.

*“Clear is kind. Unclear is unkind.” – Brene Brown*

One of my first duties as Chair was to find, interview, and hire a new Executive Director. A daunting task, but one I took very seriously given the changes I was determined to make in how our Board operates. What we needed was someone with strong organizational and leadership skills, but above all that, someone with unquestionable integrity. As you continue reading about what we accomplished over the past 16 months, I'm sure you'll agree that Kim Link, the Executive Director I had the privilege of hiring, fits that bill to a T. If my tenure as Chair achieves nothing more than opening the way for Kim to do her job as she does, that would be in line with another of my favorite Brene Brown quotes:

*“At the end of the day, at the end of the week, at the end of my life, I want to say I contributed more than I criticized.” – Brene Brown*

With all that said, here's what your Board has accomplished in 16 months.

1. The Board adopted regulations for art therapists and alcohol and drug counselors.
2. The Board proposed regulations regarding the practice of teletherapy. We expect the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Health to sign off on these regulations this month. Please review them carefully so you understand the requirements regarding providing counseling services via teletherapy. Note that different states may have different teletherapy regulations, so if you intend to provide teletherapy services to a client located in another state, the Board recommends that you research that state's teletherapy regulations. For example, jurisdictions in another state may require you to hold a license from that state.
3. The Legislation and Regulations Committee, in collaboration with the Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors of Maryland (LCPCM), is working on a comprehensive review and revision of the regulations pertaining to licensed graduate and clinical professional counselors. The revisions will create a separate chapter for LCPC/LGPC and will be more reader-friendly. Once completed, the Committee will review the regulations chapter regarding graduate and clinical marriage and family counselors and determine if any revisions are warranted.
4. HB1104 passed the Maryland legislature and is effective July 1, 2019. The bill corrected certain provisions of the art therapy statute, requires criminal history records reports for alcohol and drug trainees, subjects alcohol and drug trainees to the same disciplinary sanctions as other alcohol and drug counselors, allows the Board to participate in the Federal RAP Back program, and allows electronic license verification. Once RAP Back is implemented, the Board will receive updated federal criminal history information automatically, eliminating the need for additional federal background checks. This program does not include Maryland criminal history record reports, so licensees will still be required to obtain a Maryland criminal history record report every six years. Hand in hand with that, starting July 1, 2019, the Board will no longer print paper licenses. License verification will be available online or by calling the Board's offices. This will allow the Board to issue licenses in a timelier manner.
5. The Board notified licensees regarding regulations enacted in 2011 regarding approved supervisors. In the notice, the Board reminded licensees that all individuals providing supervision must be approved by the Board.
6. The Board notified licensees regarding the increase in reports received by the Board regarding unlicensed practice. The notice reminded licensees that those without a certificate or license (graduate or clinical) issued by the Board may not practice clinical counseling or therapy as defined by Maryland law.

7. The Board established the Board Composition Committee to review the current composition of the Board, to create objective criteria to determine which professions should be regulated by the Board, to research counseling boards in other jurisdictions, and to make recommendations to the Board regarding those findings.

8. The Board is developing an online, on-demand Maryland law exam that will be in a tutorial learning format (no-fail) and will be available on any device. Certificates of completion will be immediately available for the applicant to email to the Board. This will further expedite the application process. The new exam format is expected to be available this summer.

9. The Board has hired additional licensing staff and has streamlined the application process, including updating the Board's website and most of its forms. The Board consistently posts meeting agenda and minutes on the website. The Board submitted the **2018 annual report**. The Board no longer requires first-time renewals to obtain a CHRC, and requires licensees to obtain a new CHRC every six years.

10. The Board is working with MDH and MDoIT to obtain an online licensing system to include online application submission and tracking.

11. The Board hired an investigator supervisor and an investigator, allowing us to significantly reduce the complaint backlog.

As your Board, it's our duty to make it as clear as possible for you to know what Maryland law and Board regulations require, and as easy as possible for you to comply and document that compliance. The above list is the opening salvo in our effort to do precisely that. You can count on the Board to keep working to continue improving things, and on me to keep you informed of those improvements. Have an enjoyable summer and thank you for the work you do every day to support the mental health of Maryland citizens.

Risa Ganel, LCMFT, Board Chair

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