



Board of Examiners for Counselors and Marriage & Family Therapists

Presentation to the Interim Committee on Leveraging Telehealth and
Telemedicine

August 27, 2019



Overview of Counseling Licenses

- ▶ Licensed Professional Counselors
 - ▶ Masters or doctorate in counseling
 - ▶ Passage of a national examination
 - ▶ 2,000 hours of post-graduate supervision with an approved supervisor (plan of supervision)
 - ▶ Full practice rights under the plan of supervision
- ▶ Licensed Professional Counselors – Mental Health
 - ▶ Masters or doctorate in counseling with an emphasis in mental health
 - ▶ Holds a license in professional counseling in South Dakota
 - ▶ 2,000 hours of post-graduate direct client contact under a plan of supervision
 - ▶ Passage of a national examination with mental health emphasis
 - ▶ Full practice rights under the LPC/plan of supervision



Overview of Counseling Licenses

- ▶ Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist
 - ▶ Masters or doctorate in counseling with an emphasis in marriage & family therapy
 - ▶ Passage of a national examination
 - ▶ 1,700 hours of post-graduate supervision with an approved supervisor (plan of supervision)
 - ▶ Full practice rights under the plan of supervision



Plan of Supervision Basics



- ▶ Plans of Supervision gives the holder the right to practice as a counselor or therapist, under the license of the approved supervisor.
 - ▶ Generally, weekly check-ins with the supervisor
 - ▶ Supervision may be done as a combination of in-person or electronic hours
 - ▶ Supervision may be done as a combination of individual or group hours
 - ▶ LPC under plan of supervision may not be able to bill all 3rd party payors
 - ▶ LPC-MH under plan of supervision is able to bill most 3rd party payors
 - ▶ LMFT under plan of supervision is able to bill some 3rd party payors
 - ▶ Other states issues licenses equivalent to our plan of supervision, but the practice rights are the same



Licensee Numbers - LPC

- ▶ Licensed Professional Counselors

- ▶ 504 LPCs

- ▶ Sioux Falls – 130 LPC (25%)

- ▶ Rapid City – 51 LPCs (10%)

- ▶ Aberdeen – 20 LPCs (3%)

- ▶ Yankton – 15 LPCs (3%)

- ▶ Brookings – 14 LPCs (2%)

- ▶ Spearfish – 12 LPCs (2%)

- ▶ Mitchell – 11 LPCs (2%)

- ▶ Watertown – 10 LPCs (2%)

- ▶ Pierre – 9 LPCs (1%)

50% of licensees are in 9 cities in the State.

99 open plans of supervision



Licensee Numbers – LPC-MH

- ▶ Licensed Professional Counselors – Mental Health

- ▶ 323 LPC-MHs

- ▶ Sioux Falls – 116 LPC-MHs (36%)
 - ▶ Rapid City – 50 LPC-MHs (15%)
 - ▶ Aberdeen – 20 LPC-MHs (6%)
 - ▶ Spearfish – 13 LPC-MHs (4%)
 - ▶ Brookings – 12 LPC-MHs (3%)
 - ▶ Mitchell – 11 LPC-MHs (3%)
 - ▶ Yankton – 10 LPC-MHs (3%)
 - ▶ Pierre – 9 LPC-MHs (2%)
 - ▶ Watertown – 7 LPC-MHs (2%)

74% of licensees are in 9 cities in the State.

100 open plans of supervision



Licensee Numbers – MFTs

- ▶ Licensed Marriage & Family Therapists

- ▶ 95 MFTs

- ▶ Sioux Falls – 46 LPCs (48%)

- ▶ Rapid City – 9 LPCs (9%)

- ▶ Aberdeen – 4 LPCs (4%)

- ▶ Brookings – 2 LPCs (2%)

- ▶ Spearfish – 2 LPCs (2%)


- ▶ Mitchell – 1 LPCs (1%)

66% of licensees are in 6 cities in the State.

6 open plans of supervision



Licensee Overview

- ▶ 922 current licensees that can provide counseling services within their training, expertise and education
 - ▶ 106 applicants pending for licensure as an LPC or MFT
 - ▶ 100 applicants moving toward a higher level of licensure (LPC-MH)
 - ▶ Approximately half of the licensees in each category are 50+ years of age
 - ▶ 224/504 LPCs are 50 years of age or older
 - ▶ 153/323 LPC-MHs are 50 years of age or older
 - ▶ 66/95 MFTs are 50 years of age or older
 - ▶ New applicants are continuing the location trend of current licensees (large communities versus small communities)
 - ▶ Approximately 2/3 of all licensees are in one of 9 communities
- 



Opportunities for Telehealth

- ▶ Electronic delivery of counseling is allowed within the ACA Code of Ethics and HIPAA
- ▶ 3rd party payments are generally available for counseling delivered by electronic means
- ▶ Supervision for licensure is allowed to take place electronically
 - ▶ Geography is a barrier to weekly supervision requirement (approved supervisors are not always where the applicant/patient is located)
 - ▶ 50% must be in person and 50% can be done electronically
 - ▶ Board is working to clarify this allowance so HIPAA compliant electronic options can be utilized for additional supervision hours
 - ▶ Board is also working to change the specific weekly supervision requirements to a timeframe to allow for supervisors to meet with supervisees on a less frequent basis, but still maintain the plan of supervision under the supervisor's license



Challenges for Telehealth Counseling



- ▶ Counseling via electronic means includes some unique challenges
 - ▶ Confirmation of patient identity
 - ▶ Provision of options if the distant patient becomes agitated or suicidal
 - ▶ Secure platforms for providing the services
- ▶ Counseling services for a patient located in the state are subject to licensure as a counselor or therapist in South Dakota
 - ▶ Public safety issue to make sure the patient is being served by a competent provider
 - ▶ Board is working to clarify opportunities for qualified licensees from other states to be licensed in South Dakota on a temporary basis and/or permanently to allow for counseling services to be provided electronically, where appropriate



Jennifer Stalley, Executive Secretary

Board of Examiners for Counselors and Marriage & Family Therapists

PO Box 340

Pierre, SD 57501

605-224-1721

SDBCE@midwestsolutionsd.com

<https://dss.sd.gov/licensingboards/examiners.aspx>