

MISSISSIPPI STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS FOR SOCIAL WORK AND MARRIAGE FAMILY THERAPISTS

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, by Proclamation dated March 14, 2020, issued by Tate Reeves, Governor of the State of Mississippi, a state of emergency was declared pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. Section §33-15-11, in order to address the high risk for an outbreak of the novel coronavirus known as COVID-19, in the State of Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identifies the potential public health threat posed by COVID-19 both globally and in the United States as “very high”, and has advised that person-to-person spread of COVID-19 will continue to occur globally, including within the United States; and

WHEREAS, the CDC recommends mitigation measures for communities experiencing an outbreak including limiting face-to-face contact with others as much as possible and replacing in-person meetings with video or telephone conferences; and

WHEREAS, the Governor’s Proclamation has invoked the emergency powers of the Governor pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. Section §33-15-11(c)(1) to temporarily suspend or modify any state statute, rule, regulation or order which would in any way prevent, hinder or delay necessary action in coping with the emergency; and

WHEREAS, the Mississippi State Board of Examiners for Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists, as an agency of the State of Mississippi, wishes to comply with the Governor’s Proclamation and take those steps necessary to address access to care for the people in the State of Mississippi during this time of emergency; and

WHEREAS, Part 1902, Chapter 3, Rule 3.4 authorizes only Social Workers to use technology/telehealth in practice; and

WHEREAS, the Board recognizes that in order to receive health care, many patients are required to travel both in-state and out-of-state to see their healthcare providers.

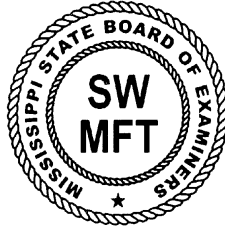


NOW THEREFORE, until further action is taken by the Governor of the State of Mississippi to lift the declared emergency, every Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist hereafter includes Licensed Marriage and Family Therapy Associates utilizing technology/telehealth in practice under the Board's Proclamation shall comply with the provisions of Part 1902, Chapter 3, Rule 3.4 (B) and (C) of the Board's Rules and Regulations.

FURTHER, until action is taken by the Governor to lift the state of emergency, out-of-state Social Workers and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists may utilize telehealth/technology in practice when treating patients in Mississippi without the necessity of securing a license to practice in this State, provided the out-of-state Social Worker or Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist holds an unrestricted license to practice in the state in which the Social Worker or Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist practices and currently is not the subject of an investigation or disciplinary proceeding and so advises the Board in writing.

FURTHER, until further action is taken by the Governor of the State of Mississippi, the Mississippi State Board of Examiners for Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists does hereby temporarily suspend the following requirements of the Board's Rules and Regulations:

- a. The provisions of the first paragraph, Emergency, of Part 1902, Chapter 2, Rule 2.6 (C).
- b. The provisions of Part 1902, Chapter 2, Rule 2.6 (C) (1) (c) and 2(b).
- c. The provision of Part 1903, Chapter 2, Rule 2.2 (C) and (E) (3), requiring 500 hours of face-to-face clinical contact hours and no less than 200 relational contact hours.
- d. The provision of Part 1902, Chapter 4, Rule 4.1 (D) (7) (e), which limits the distance learning/internet (online) learning continuing education to a maximum of twenty (20) hours.
- e. The provisions of Part 1903, Chapter 4, Rule 4.1 (B) and (E) (5) which prohibit or limit distance learning/internet (online) learning courses for fulfillment of ethics continuing education requirements.




FURTHER, until further action is taken by the Governor of the State of Mississippi, the Mississippi State Board of Examiners for Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapy does hereby modify its Rules and Regulations to provide that, as used in said Rules and Regulations, the term face-to-face shall include audiovisual electronic device (i.e. skype, facetime, webex, etc.) provided there is direct, interactive, live exchange between the involved individuals or participants or provided that communication is verbally or visually interactive between the involved individuals or participants.

FURTHER, every Social Worker or Marriage and Family Therapist who is currently licensed in another state or jurisdiction and who wishes to practice in this State shall complete the Emergency Provisional Permit found on the Mississippi State Board of Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists website.

FURTHER, except as specifically stated herein, all other regulations remain in full force and effect.

SO, ORDERED AND APPROVED by the Mississippi State Board of Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists this, the 24th day of March 2020.

MISSISSIPPI STATE BOARD OF SOCIAL WORKERS AND
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS

By: 
Billy Dilworth, Executive Director