

**RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELORS
AND MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS**

September 14, 2007

Open Meeting Minutes

The Open Session of the Board of Mental Health Counselors and Marriage and Family Therapists was called to order at 10:00 am on the above date in Room 104, Cannon Building, Department of Health, 3 Capitol Hill, Providence, Rhode Island, pursuant to the applicable provisions of the Open Meetings, so called, and other applicable provisions of the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island, as amended. A quorum was established.

Board members in attendance:

James Pinel

Terrence Giblin

Noelle Harris

Dale Blumen

Joseph Costa

Ronald Mancini

Board Members not in attendance:

John Roche

Staff members in attendance:

Donna Dickerman

Elizabeth Shelov

New member, Noelle Harris, was welcomed to the Board.

The minutes of the meeting held June 9, 2007 were presented. On motion by Terrence Giblin, seconded by Dale Blumen, it was unanimously voted to accept the Open Session minutes as presented.

The Board reviewed a letter from Katherine Grijalva requesting to begin her supervised hours based on the completion of her master degree in psychology. The coursework of the degree in psychology has met the academic requirements necessary to meet URI's MFT graduate program. On a motion entered by Dale Blumen, seconded by Terrence Giblin, the Board unanimously approved her request.

MHC/MFT Open Minutes Page 2 September 14, 2007

A cease and desist letter had been sent to Marcia House, who is not licensed, to cease practicing mental health counseling. The cease and desist was based on a complaint filed by Blue Cross/Blue Shield alleging a client of Ms. House sought reimbursement for counseling

services. A copy of an individual billing record was received from Blue Cross. The billing record was imprinted with the following heading: Marcia House, M.A., Psychotherapy, Holistic Approaches to Counseling. The record also had handwritten "Treatment provided by Marcia House, individual counseling sessions."

Robert Landau, Attorney, contacted this administrator stating his client was not practicing mental health counseling and requested he and Marcia House meet with the Board regarding said matter. Ms. House and an attorney from Mr. Landau's office met with the Board. Ms. House stated she received a Masters degree from Salve Regina College about 20 years ago. She stated health issues, which she still has, kept her from finishing licensing requirements. She also stated 20 years ago there was no licensure, and she was not aware of the law, i.e., protecting both the practice and title of mental health counseling. She stated she had business cards designating her as a counselor, which she has destroyed since receiving the cease and desist. Further, Ms. House's attorney stated she has stopped practicing since receipt of the letter; however, he feels Ms. House practices mind body healing as defined within the RI Unlicensed Health Care Practices Statute.

Ms. House stated she is not practicing counseling; rather she is "helping people discover insight into body awareness". She stated she focuses on mind body healing. She has clients focus on sensations, focuses on an organic plan for what is going on in the

body and uses guided imagery; making them aware of themselves. When asked by a board member if she would describe her methods as “Gestalt”; she stated “yes”. She stated she does not diagnose, has no treatment plans. She stated she works with some clients who have undergone trauma. She reported some of these clients have begun to physically shake during the processes she uses. She has only had to refer two or three times for medical intervention. Ms. House has liability insurance through HPSO with coverage as a counselor. She stated she receives supervision – a group of four individuals; two (2) of who are licensed and two who are not. The group has a holistic orientation.

Ms. House and her attorney expressed hope the Board would be able to advise her. Board members unanimously informed Mr. House and her attorney that she has been practicing mental health counseling, as defined in the licensing law. The Board further informed Ms. House and her attorney she cannot continue to practice as a counselor, cannot advertise as a counselor and strongly suggested she return to school to enable her to meet licensing requirements.

The Board reviewed and unanimously approved the following mental health counselor applications for licensure pending successful completion of the national examination:

- Amy Battersby (pending remaining supervision/letters of reference)
- Daniel Barbosa
- Barbara Fioravanti

- Kerrie Wentworth

MHC/MFT Open Minutes Page 3 September 14, 2007

The Board reviewed and unanimously approved the following marriage and family therapist applications for licensure, pending successful completion of the national certification exam:

- Pablo Bayo**
- Shannon Foley**
- Elizabeth Gooding (pending completion of supervision)**
- Erica Johnson**

Adjournment

On motion of Terrence Giblin, seconded by Ronald Mancini, it was unanimously voted to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 11:50 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna Dickerman

Board Administrator

Health Professionals Regulation