

Message from the OBLPCT Chair

Dear Stakeholder:

I am writing to update you on three recent and very important changes to the Oregon Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists (OBLPCT) Oregon Administrative Rules that may affect you. **These rules were filed, and are effective, as of Friday, October 2, 2015.**

LPC and LMFT registered intern title designation

Over the past several months, the Board has become aware of concerns surrounding registered interns' use of titles that do not clearly indicate their status as not yet licensed counselors or therapists. Specifically, many registered interns were using "LPCi" and "LMFTi" to denote their credentials, which has caused confusion to consumers of mental health services in Oregon. After a thorough review of many public comments on this issue, the Board adopted a rule amendment that no longer allows interns to use "any permutation" of the titles "registered intern", meaning interns may no longer use "LPCi", "LMFTi", or any other variation. Interns must now only use "LPC intern," or "LMFT intern." This change ensures consistency in interns' representations to the public and removes uncertainty regarding appropriate title usage, providing clear expectations to registered interns.

Increase in fee for licensure application and initial license

This amendment increased the fee required to apply for licensure as a professional counselor or a marriage and family therapist from \$125 (without background check) to \$175, or from \$172.25 (with background check) to \$222.25. The fee for an initial license as a professional counselor or a marriage and family therapist has also increased from \$100 to \$125. The Board carefully reviewed all public comments on this issue, and there was some confusion regarding the specific fee increases. Please note that this amendment does not increase license or internship registration renewal fees.

These fees have not changed in 13 years. Yet, during this time the total number of licensees and interns has more grown from 1,578 in 2002 to 4,298 today; a 172% increase. The agency is completely funded by the fees it collects. The primary purpose of this increase is to fund two much-needed half time positions within the agency, to assist with the growing number of interns/licensees and increasing volume of complaints.

Repeal of the expired counselor educator application method

In 2010, the Board convened a Counselor Educator Workgroup with the purpose of looking at current education, experience, and examination licensing requirements, and exploring the possibility of allowing teaching experience to serve as a substitute for other licensing requirements. The primary intent was to encourage experienced and existing faculty at Oregon colleges and universities to become licensed in Oregon. After much consideration, the "counselor educator application method" rule became effective May 15, 2012, and allowed graduate level teaching to meet education requirements for licensure as a professional counselor or a marriage therapist for a limited two-year time period. By the time the rule expired on June

30, 2014, only a small handful of individuals had applied under this method. The Board has now repealed this expired rule.

The Board sincerely appreciates the many helpful public rulemaking comments that were received. Thanks to each of you for the quality mental health care you provide to the citizens of Oregon.

Sincerely,

Don Thomson, LPC, Chair
Oregon Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists