

# North Carolina Family Therapist



*Strengthening family, couple, and individual health*

North Carolina Association  
for Marriage and Family  
Therapy.

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## From the President's Desk— Strengthening our Profession Karen Caldwell, PhD, LMFT

Our MFT profession passed a major milestone this year when Montana and West Virginia passed MFT licensure bills creating licensure in all 50 states and the District. Did you know that North Carolina was one of the first states to have a certification/licensure law for MFTs (after California, Michigan, New Jersey and Utah)? North Carolina's recognition of MFTs in 1979 was originally certification and shifted to licensure in 1994.

A much needed update to NC MFT licensure was signed into law on July 31, 2009. Changes were made to the educational requirements and options for those seeking reciprocal MFT (licensed in other states) licensure and a provisional licensure option (LMFTA) was created. Hopefully, these changes will strengthen the profession. NCAMFT worked with the MFT licensure board this legislative session to help make this update happen, and we extend deep appreciation to the licensure board members for their hard work



throughout the process. For more information on the specifics of these changes and their implementation, check directly with the licensure board at [www.ncmft.org](http://www.ncmft.org).

Another important way to strengthen the profession is through strategic planning. The national AAMFT strategic planning process, begun in 2008, is at a half-way point. The goal is to ask comprehensive questions about the Association and its priorities with the intention of setting a basic direction for the organization for the coming years. What are the challenges you face and how can your association help you meet these challenges? You can write directly to the AAMFT Board at [board@aamft.org](mailto:board@aamft.org) with any thoughts or comments you have about the strategic direction of the association or communicate with the NCAMFT Board at [cami@nc.rr.com](mailto:cami@nc.rr.com). Our hope is to continue to strength our profession as we prepare for the future.

## **NC MFT Statutes Changes—Effective October 1, 2009**

### **by Wanda Nicholson, NCMFTLB Executive Director**

Effective October 1, 2009, marriage and family licensure board statutory changes signed by NC Governor Beverly Perdue on July 31, 2009 will be implemented. These changes will incorporate the addition of a provisional licensure option (LMFTA) as well as changes to the educational requirements and options for those who are licensed in other states and are seeking NC MFT licensure. On or about September 15, 2009, new forms and the revised statutes as well as polices and procedures regarding these changes will be posted at [www.ncmft.org](http://www.ncmft.org). We appreciate your patience as we develop these new materials in the next few weeks. The NC MFT Licensure Board has worked extensively to revise the licensure process and to get these changes passed by the legislature. It is anticipated these changes will strengthen the profession and make the licensure process more straightforward/clear-cut as well as enhance the Board's ability to fulfill its primary mission of "protecting the public."

#### **5 Significant Changes and How They May Affect You**

1. LMFTA (provisional license) will replace MFTA (a designation, not a license). In order to be provisionally licensed, an applicant, in addition to meeting the educational requirements, will be required to pass the National MFT Exam before the LMFTA can be obtained. Those who currently hold the MFTA and have PASSED the National MFT Exam will automatically be upgraded to the LMFTA and will be mailed a license reflecting this change no later than October 15, 2009. The expiration date for the LMFTA will remain the same as the original MFTA expiration date which was/is valid for three years from date of issue. Those who have not passed the exam at this point will retain the MFTA designation until it expires or they have upgraded to the LMFTA. The Board will not be designating new applicants as MFTA after October 1. Only licensure at the LMFT or LMFTA level will be available as of October 1, 2009.
2. Persons employed at non-profit institutions are no longer exempt from the licensure law. They must be licensed (LMFT, LMFTA or other recognized professions under NC statutes) in order to practice.
3. LMFTs in other states may also apply for licensure by reciprocity in NC if they have been licensed for five continuous years and are currently licensed with an unrestricted license in good standing, with no unresolved complaints and have passed the National MFT Examination.
4. The reinstatement fee for lapsed/expired licenses will increase from \$125 to \$200. Maintaining a license as 'inactive' will incur an annual fee of \$50. License applications will require a fee of \$200. There is no change in the annual license renewal fee of \$100.
5. Criminal background checks may be required.

(Information about continuing education requirements is located on page 3.)

## From the Board of Directors:

### An Open Letter to our Members:

There have been a number of recent emails and questions concerning the state of the National AAMFT and the direction of our Association. Your Board of Directors met recently and discussed the issues that are of concern at the state and national level. We are pleased with the direction of the dialogue and are dedicated to maintaining open conversation with our national and state leaders.

We understand that systems are always in a state of change and growth. Change always engenders a certain level of anxiety because of the unknown and the unfamiliar. Each of us handles our anxiety a bit differently than others. Some AAMFT members across the country are expressing high levels of anxiety about our

national organization and concerns about the direction of our association. We at the state level are very aware of the need for ongoing growth and change in our national association and are determined to support healthy growth and change in the coming years. The national association is currently engaged in an extensive Strategic Planning program. We trust that the program will be fully implemented and supported at all levels of our association.

We are very positive about the future of our national and state associations and look to the future for positive growth and change. We are committed to transparency with our members and welcome any open dialogue and discussion with each of you.

### **NC MFT Continuing Education Requirements**

The requirement for the reporting period of July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010 for continuing education remains at **12** contact hours. **Only continuing education units that by title and content clearly deal with marriage and family therapeutic issues shall be accepted by the Board. Thus, the Board is looking for programs that are focused on clinical therapeutic issues and treatment application for the therapy (treatment) of individuals, couples, families, and groups.**

The NC MFT Licensure Board does not, at this time, pre-approve courses. The above guidelines as well as the Administrative Rules for licensure renewal (mailed with renewal packets and posted at the Board's website) provide sufficient information to assist you in determining acceptable coursework. For more information about the continuing education requirements go to [www.ncmft.org](http://www.ncmft.org). Renewal packets are mailed by March 15 of each year to the last address of record. It is important to update the Board with any address change during the year. If you do not receive a packet, you are still responsible for ensuring your license is renewed. You may submit your request for renewal as soon as the new forms are available. Waiting until the due date is not required and is discouraged. Duplicate renewal forms are also posted at [www.ncmft.org](http://www.ncmft.org) by March 15 each year.

(Information about recent NC MFT Statute changes is found on page 2.)

Wanda Nicholson, Executive Director NC MFTLB

## Affecting MFTs Recent NC Law and Budget Changes by Chad Jordan, LMFT

The great state of North Carolina has been undergoing significant changes as has been alluded to in previous professional practice articles. Some not so good and some very exciting for the MFT profession. We are regarded as highly skilled practitioners who accept and promote change in unique ways when compared to our colleagues of differing licensure types. Furthermore, we continue to look for ways to advance our profession and make a difference in the lives of the families, communities and organizations we serve.

To mention a recent success, at the end of July 2009 Governor Purdue signed a bill into law that further legitimizes the MFT-A by recognizing those in the associate status as provisionally licensed professionals. This may not seem like much to some but it provides a level security for those seeking licensure that many other states do not have, consequently, it affords potential for future reimbursement possibilities.

There will be significant changes in the public MH/DD/SAS system due to the state budget cuts; most drastic is the phasing out of Community Support. There is talk that a similar service will be offered in 2010 but it is unclear what the state plans to do with the thousands of consumers currently receiving Community Support. Many will be discharged and go without, some will be transitioned into other services, if they meet criteria and there

may be a surge of referrals to basic outpatient therapy providers. Residential treatment options are declining and a host of other enhanced benefits will remain as options. I encourage you to stay informed of updates and revisions to public mental health, developmental disability and substance abuse service policy and service definitions. You may do so by exploring the NCDHHS website where they will often provide a forum for feedback from the public: <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dma/mpproposed/index.htm>

As always, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me if you have any questions concerns or comments.

### **NCAMFT Annual Conference February 26–27, 2010 Male and Female Sexual Health**

**Sallie Foley, LMSW**

**Pre-Conference  
February 25, 2010**

**Millennium Hotel  
Durham, NC**

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## What Do You Do When Served with a Subpena?

by Corrine Sackett, LMFT

What Do You Do When Served With a Subpoena?

LMFTs in North Carolina have privileged communication with clients, which is the right to withhold testimony or records in a legal proceeding, as stated in General Statutes 8-53.5. Given this, what happens to confidentiality and privileged communication if you are served with a subpoena? It is the client's right to assert or waive this privilege. In other words, the client is the holder of the privilege. However in the absence of the client, for instance, when a subpoena is served, the therapist will need to assert privilege on

behalf of the client until the client is informed and can do so themselves. Because subpoenas are legal documents that cannot be ignored and are not something many of us deal with on a regular basis, the next critical step is to get legal advice and not to respond on your own. It is important at this time to contact your liability insurance carrier to notify them and to ask for a legal opinion. If you are a clinical member of AAMFT, you also have access to free legal consultation through AAMFT, which would be extremely useful in this situation. In general, as a preemptive measure, it is a good idea to become familiar with the attorneys

in your geographic area who work with mental health cases and who are familiar with our field so that if and when a legal concern arises, you know who to call on. Ultimately, because marriage and family therapy, not law, is our business, it is crucial to get legal guidance on these issues when they arise.

On another, related note, we have an upcoming conference on November 6 in Raleigh focusing on domestic violence and the related legal and ethical issues. Please join us for this event!

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[cami@nc.rr.com](mailto:cami@nc.rr.com)



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## Update from the North Central Chapter by Theresa Palmer, LMFT

Two well-attended North Central Chapter meetings were held in June and July. The topic was couples counseling, conducted by chapter member Chris Burris, LMFT. For therapists interested in learning more about Internal Family Systems (IFS), please contact Chris at [self@triad.rr.com](mailto:self@triad.rr.com) for upcoming IFS Level I training in Asheville. Also look for a chapter post card and email announcing the next chapter meeting and continuing education topic. If you haven't attended yet or it's been awhile, please make time for our next meeting as an opportunity to earn contact hours and network with colleagues in the field. For more information about chapter meetings, feel free to call or email Theresa Palmer, Chapter Director at (336) 923-5065 or [theresapalmer@hotmail.com](mailto:theresapalmer@hotmail.com).

We hope to see you there!

## CHAPTER NEWS

### Capital Chapter

For additional information please contact the NCAMFT office.

### North Central Chapter

For additional information please contact

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(336)721-7619  
[tpalmer@tchome.org](mailto:tpalmer@tchome.org)

### Mid-Central Chapter

For additional information please contact

Joanna Warren  
336-228-0787  
[joanna\\_leigh\\_2000@yahoo.com](mailto:joanna_leigh_2000@yahoo.com)

### Northeast Chapter

For additional information please contact

Ruth Cox  
910-347-3010  
[ruthpcox@msn.com](mailto:ruthpcox@msn.com)

### Southeast Chapter

For additional information please contact

Jerry Powell, PhD, LMFT  
[powjerry@gmail.com](mailto:powjerry@gmail.com)

### Southwest Chapter

Please visit [www.ncamft.org](http://www.ncamft.org) for additional information or contact

Trip Woodard  
828-681-0513  
[wescom@bellsouth.net](mailto:wescom@bellsouth.net)

### Northwest Chapter

For additional information please contact

Joan Zimmerman, LMFT  
[thezims@charter.net](mailto:thezims@charter.net)

### South Central Chapter

The South Central Chapter continues to meet 10X annually on the 3rd Thursday of the month @ Pfeiffer University (near Park & Woodlawn)

from 12 noon - 1:30pm. For additional information and to RSVP please contact

B. Anne Hancock  
704-701-2571  
[bahmfcc@aol.com](mailto:bahmfcc@aol.com)

## The North Carolina Family Therapist Newsletter

### Editor

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## Fall Conference Designed to Address Domestic Violence in Civilian and Military Families

by Emma Wallace, MS, LMFT

Our fall conference this year will be held on November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009, at Embassy Suites at Crabtree Valley Mall in Raleigh. The conference brochure is enclosed and we urge you to take advantage of this great opportunity to learn more about intervention and treatment in families where domestic violence is evident. Some of the workshops are designed to target military families, where domestic violence can be even more problematic. Please share this information with your colleagues, as we want to reach out to other disciplines as well as MFT's.

We are fortunate to have acquired such knowledgeable and dynamic presenters for

this conference. I see many domestic violence-related difficulties in my own practice and look forward to learning more about effective interventions with couples and families as I try to help them heal and find harmony and peace in their relationships. This conference should cover most aspects of domestic violence and how we, as marriage and family therapists, social workers, LPC's or other disciplines, can most effectively guide families to better ways of communicating without any form of violence, threats, or control tactics.

The conference content will include ethics and legal challenges (3 hours), crisis

and intervention, working with couples, children, and with military families. The morning session will be a general session for everyone and the two presenters will address legal and ethical issues involved in domestic violence. The afternoon will consist of 2 breakout sessions that you can choose from. Please watch for the registration brochure and mark your calendars for this upcoming event.

Don't forget our Annual Conference with Sallie Foley, February, 2010. More on that conference later. Hope you have had a great summer! See you at our "cool" November conference!



Donations are still needed to make our goal of \$10,000 towards our Capital Campaign. For additional information, please contact Michelle Cawn at [mcawn@ufsclt.org](mailto:mcawn@ufsclt.org).



*Strengthening family, couple, and individual health*

NCAMFT  
P O Box 98073  
Raleigh, NC 27624  
877-8NCAMFT

## **Mark Your Calendars!**

**November 6, 2009  
Fall CEU Event  
Domestic Violence  
Embassy Suites, Crabtree Valley Mall  
Raleigh, NC**

**February 25–27, 2010  
Annual Conference and Pre-Conference  
Male and Female Sexual Health  
Sallie Foley, LMSW  
Location to be determined**