

821



2/10/09

Dear Committee Members:

I am concerned about S.B. 821, "An Act Concerning Marital and Family Therapists" that seeks to remove insurance reimbursements for all MFT's in an effort to reduce health care costs. As the Director of a Hospital Based Behavioral Health Center, MFT's are an integral aspect of our multi-disciplinary treatment team. We are similar, yet different, than our colleagues. It has been *decades* since we were mere "marriage counselors". Since the fifties, our profession has been treating individuals, couples and families with acute and severe psychopathologies; and we are uniquely qualified to work directly with families or couples as we do believe the best outcomes will occur when all member of the family are included in treatment. Research article after research article reports that our outcomes in the treatment of psychopathologies are equal to that of our colleagues. So much so, that the both the Federal and State governments recognize our license.

Today, MFT's are treating patients in hospitals, mental health and domestic violence agencies, and addiction treatment centers as well as all the commercial and non profit insurance companies that manage benefits. I frequently talk to LMFT who are care mangers at Anthem, UBH, ABH, etc.

At our hospital, we refer to MFT's from both the inpatient and outpatient programs. Within a ten mile radius of the Hospital of Central Connecticut are four other mental health agencies that recognize the value of MFT's in the behavioral health professions.

As a both a taxpayer and director, I am interested in saving money. I have the arduous task of making my clinic operate with less staff and become more efficient. The MFT's I have working for me treat approximately 120 clients per week, many of which would end up in a much higher and costly level of care / treatment. So, I am not too sure the way to do reduce the budget this is my dismissing this profession.

Personally, I am not sure that the commercial insurance companies should be not told by the state who they can contract with as they are responsible to their consumers. I would also like to know how by eliminating MFT's from commercial insurances, we are saving the taxpayer money.

I think there are other ways to reduce behavioral health costs to the state and I certainly would like to participate on a state task force designed to address this issue. I would recommend representatives from DHMAS, DPH, and a variety of behavioral health providers participate.

I thank you for reading this and listening to our concerns,

Sincerely,

**David Borzellino, LMFT
Director, Out patient Behavioral Health**