

**From:** Le Ondra Clark Harvey

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 24, 2020 11:06 AM

**Subject:** Essential behavioral health workforce in DIRE need of restrictions waived

**Importance:** High

Dear Secretary Ramirez, Secretary Ghaly and Health Care Colleagues in the Newsom Administration,

I know you all are working hard on behalf of Californians and I have been pleased with how responsive anyone I have reached out to at various state agencies and the Governor's Office has been during this crisis.

I am writing to update you on the what is happening with behavioral healthcare essential personnel as it relates to licensing and certification issues. I have been in touch with my fine colleagues at the Board of Behavioral Sciences and the Director of the Department of Consumer Affairs who are working to assist trainees and licensees, but their hands seem to be tied due to current statutory restrictions they do not have the sole authority to waive/lift.

Our organization represents behavioral health clinics. Many members are concerned about their depleted workforce due to illness, needing to care for family etc. Additionally, many of those who are able and willing to provide services via telehealth etc., cannot as they fear that they will be out of order with the licensing boards. This is especially so for trainees. We are hearing that our agencies are considering laying off additional essential personnel by the end of the week because their license just lapsed or is about to, and they are unable to renew it because the licensing boards are closed. In the case of trainees, some are scheduled to take the April licensing examination and if they are unable to, they will be laid off by clinics who are fearful to employ them if trainees do not take the April examination.

I've been advised that there is nothing that can be done to change the statutory licensure requirements at this time. I'm unsure if emergency regulations can be pursued, but this is a potential solution. The last solution is an executive order which would lift or waive licensure and certification requirements (including examinations) for essential personnel during a state of crisis.

I am desperate for a solution for the many safety net clinics that provide services to so many vulnerable Californians who need behavioral health treatment. Please help the clinics I represent keep their staff employed and their doors (physical or virtual) open by lifting/waiving licensure, examination and certification requirements that the essential behavioral health personnel are unable to comply with due to the COVID-19 crisis.


Thank you for consideration of this salient request.

Stay safe and healthy,  
Le Ondra Clark Harvey

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