



July 2, 2018

The Pennsylvania Association for Marriage and Family Therapists (PAMFT) would like to thank Senator Killion, his staff, the Pennsylvania legislature and Governor Wolf for passing SB530. After a 20-year effort, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists and other licensed mental health providers can now officially, and with legal authority, diagnose mental disorders and practice independently, providing further protection to the public.

Pennsylvanians deserve the best mental health care available and SB530 brings our licensing regulations to the highest standard, protecting our most vulnerable populations from unethical and unlicensed individuals.

As states across the country update their licensing statutes to include legal authority to diagnose, SB530 ratifies Pennsylvania Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFT's) long standing authority to accurately evaluate, and effectively treat, Pennsylvanians that depend on them for therapeutic healing. Clarifying the state laws for LMFTs to diagnose, and requiring licensure for independent practice, will further encourage Pennsylvania legislators to follow the lead of other states to include LMFTs as Medicaid Providers in Pennsylvania.

As the stigma of seeking treatment for mental health issues continues to diminish, more people will seek professional treatment in all parts of Pennsylvania.

The Bureau of Labor and Statistics states that by 2026, the field of Marriage and Family Therapy is expected to grow by twenty-three percent. SB530 ensures that Pennsylvania MFTs will be able to continue to increase at the same growth rate of other states, ensuring continued access to quality and safe mental health care for the public as demand increases.

SB530 benefits Pennsylvania schools looking to reduce barriers to learning due to insufficient access to mental health care. Schools that struggle to find sufficient mental health providers to assist in their facilities, now have greater access to licensed MFT's systemic approach and solutions.

LMFTs are uniquely qualified to help teachers, administrators and students reduce barriers to learning due to insufficient access to mental health care. LMFTs offer an integrated philosophy, including family and school, to help children and teens reduce emotional and behavioral issues to increase success in school.

The signing of SB530 is a victory for Mental Health Care in Pennsylvania providing our state with continued access to outstanding treatment from Marriage and Family Therapists.

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