

**HEALTH REGULATION AND LICENSING ADMINISTRATION
&
HEALTH LICENSING BOARDS**

BOARD OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY
AUTHORITY FOR GUIDANCE

JULY 3, 2013
DATE OF POLICY

13-001
POLICY NO.

POLICY STATEMENT

GUIDANCE ON TELETHERAPY

This policy statement is issued to provide guidance on marriage and family teletherapy until such time as the laws and regulations are promulgated to address the matter.

The Board of Marriage and Family Therapy (“Board”) has received inquiries regarding the provision of marriage and family therapy services to clients via telecommunication technology. The matter of teletherapy and telehealth is currently under review before the legislators and regulators for the District of Columbia. Accordingly, until such time as the laws and regulations regarding this matter become final, the Board offers the following guidance for practitioners providing or intending to provide marriage and family therapy services via telecommunication:

- A licensee providing or intending to provide teletherapy to a resident of another jurisdiction where the licensee is not licensed should contact the regulator(s) in that jurisdiction to ascertain and comply with the legal requirements of the jurisdiction.
- A marriage and family therapist providing or intending to provide teletherapy to a District resident should ensure that he or she complies with applicable federal and state laws governing confidentiality and privacy, such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) privacy and security rules. Accordingly, the therapist should use only a telecommunication system, program, or means that is known to be sufficiently secure to protect the client’s privacy and confidentiality. Based on current information, Skype is not a secure means of telecommunication.
- A marriage and family therapist providing or intending to provide teletherapy to or involving a minor should observe all applicable ethical rules and safeguards to protect the minor’s rights, welfare, safety, and privacy.