

THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT MFT'S AND PAY PARITY



What are we advocating for and why?

What are the issues around pay parity?

We are seeking to ensure equity in the reimbursement Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs) receive for Family Therapy services. Currently, Family Therapy is valued and compensated at a lower rate than Individual Therapy sessions by MDH and many other insurance companies.

Example: Medical Assistance in MN pays \$130.71 for Individual Psychotherapy 53+ minutes (billing code 90837) and only \$70.01 for family therapy (billing codes 90846 and 90847)

This makes no sense given that Family Therapy is a specialty service.

Why is change needed?

If insurance reimburses less than for individual therapy, the following consequences will continue:

- MFTs will become less likely to contract and credential with insurance companies. MFTs may instead opt to develop private pay practices, which are cost prohibitive to many people seeking family therapy.
- Fewer people will go into the field of marriage and family therapy in favor of other fields. While these other professions are important in the field of mental health, they have different roots and a different scope of practice than family therapy does.
- The reduced number of MFT's taking insurance will result in longer wait times, further reducing access to family therapy

Who benefits from this change?

Our community, and especially members of our community who cannot afford private pay only services will also benefit. If fewer people become licensed family therapists and fewer still accept insurance, including medical assistance, this will limit access to affordable family therapy. This is detrimental to families and communities who are historically most marginalized, and are underserved by mental health services providers. MFTs services are at risk of becoming a 'privilege' for those with higher socioeconomic status instead of being an essential mental health service for all our families and communities.

What people need to know about MFT's

What are Marriage and Family Therapy Services?

Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) services are focused on relational dynamics and can be provided to any type of family or relational systems. In MFT services, family is defined as any group of people who are committed to and care for one another. This can include parents, caregivers, children, siblings, grandparents, aunts and uncles, close family friends, community members and so on. MFT centers the family system and conceptualizes individual mental health issues as symptoms of larger systemic issues within as well as outside the family system. Even though insurance views services as being delivered to an identified client, in MFT services the client is the relational system.

What makes MFT's different from other mental health professionals?

MFTs are the only licensed professionals who must prove experience and competency in relational therapeutic services in order to obtain their licensure. That training must include a 300 hour practicum, where trainees must provide at least 150 hours of relational therapy. After completing their formal education, MFTs must complete an additional 1,000 hours of supervised practice where 500 of those hours must be relational therapy.

Other FAQ's about MFT's

- MFT licensure is regulated by the State through the Minnesota Board of Marriage and Family Therapy (<https://mn.gov/boards/marriage-and-family/>)
- As of August 2019, there were 2,430 actively licensed marriage and family therapists (LMFTs) in Minnesota. We are one of the biggest MFT states besides California and Texas.