



MARYLAND Department of Health

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Robert R. Neall, Secretary

January 28, 2019

Dear Colleagues,

"Another email from the Board? Oh no, what did I do wrong? Am I in trouble?"

If these were your first thoughts when you scanned your inbox just now, rest easy and know that "we come in peace" as they say on Star Trek :).

The purpose of this note is to introduce myself and the Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists (BOPCT) as a whole to you, and to clear up some concerns and mistaken beliefs that have been circulating among our colleagues.

BOPCT is comprised of volunteers appointed by the Governor to regulate the 5 professions covered by our Board to protect the public from harm. We are your colleagues and are as passionate about the work we do as you are. Hi, I'm Risa Ganel, LCMFT, Chair of the Board. I've been a Marriage and Family Therapist in Maryland since 1994, before certification or licensure even existed; and in the past, I too experienced that anxiety when receiving a note from the Board.

In 2016, I accepted from Governor Hogan an appointment to this Board, knowing that many of you, myself included, were frustrated with the Board over interactions, confusing information, and unclear processes. Change was needed, and as a therapist and an agent of change, I looked forward to this challenge. I'm pleased to say that over the past 18 months we've made significant progress, and it is my mission as Chair to continue that momentum, share those improvements with you, and be as transparent as possible (though sometimes limited by confidentiality and legalities, as I'm sure you understand).

As you can imagine, January is a busy time for licensure renewal, and many of you have received notices from the Board reminding you of your renewal date, along with a link to the online renewal portal. As you gather your CEU certificates, figure out if you have enough, and possibly scramble to get in those last 2 or 3 classes before renewing, know that our staff has made numerous changes to streamline and simplify the process for you as much as possible. For example, no more paper renewals! We're finally moving into the 21st century.

This month you also received an email from the Board regarding unlicensed practice. There is no connection between your renewal notification and that informational notice, and we apologize for any confusion. It has come to the Board's attention in numerous ways that some clinicians are practicing without a license, hiring unlicensed clinicians and/or supervising unlicensed clinicians, so we provided the notice to clarify to ALL licensees what the regulations require, clearing up any mistaken beliefs out there about who can practice.

We don't want you to experience anxiety whenever you receive an email from the Board. The Board is your partner in making sure you are properly licensed to practice; and that we all do our

due diligence to protect the public from harm, and provide compassionate, effective mental health care to the citizens of Maryland.

Warm Regards,

Risa