

Sponsor Statement

HB 135

“An act relating to marital and family therapists.”

The law that established the Board of Marital and Family Therapy has been in place for ten years. It is time to pursue the placement of updated language within the statute.

[HB 135](#) will bring the Alaska Statutes for Marriage and Family Therapy to the same standard as the laws regarding other counseling services in the state and Marriage and Family Therapy statutes nationally.

HB135~

- *Adds* the Board of Marital and Family Therapy to the list of boards that may request the Division of Occupational Licensing to contract for substance abuse treatment under licensed therapists,
- *Gives* the Board of Marital and Family Therapy authority to order a licensed marital and family therapist to submit to a reasonable physical or mental examination if the board has credible evidence sufficient to conclude that the therapist’s physical or mental capacity to practice safely is at issue,
- *Allows* for individual client contact to be used as hours toward licensing,
- *Requires* the therapist to communicate to a potential victim or law enforcement officer if a threat of imminent serious physical harm to an identified victim has been made by a client,
- *Imposes* disciplinary sanctions with regard to therapist sexual misconduct.

HOUSE BILL 135 not only brings parity to the mental health professions in the state, it also adds additional consumer protection for Alaskans seeking professional counsel.