



LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS OF PSYCHOLOGISTS

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WEEKLY WEDNESDAY UPDATE #6

April 29, 2020

Dear Licensee,

The LSBEP officers and administration recognize the rapid changes occurring in your lives and practices. Therefore, this agency will continue sending weekly updates every Wednesday for the duration of the COVID19 emergency. This update is the sixth in this "Weekly Wednesday" series, refer to the LSBEP website www.lsbep.org for archived weekly updates, links to referenced information, and other communication from the board. Additionally, please note that we are aware that due to rapid changes in information and interpretation of various directives from state and local officials, information may vary over time. Please ensure you are referencing the most updated information when making decisions about your practice.

As previously noted, should news impacting your practice require more immediate attention, additional updates may be necessary. Koren Boggs, Ph.D., Chair; Amy Henke, Psy.D., Vice Chair; and Jaime Monic, Executive Director have been meeting daily via telephone or Zoom to discuss developments in regulation and resources you need to remain compliant in your practice while putting the health and welfare of your patients first. Our goal is to keep you informed, but not overwhelm your email!

For our sixth Weekly Wednesday Update, we would like to advise you of the following:

1) Tele-supervision:

- a) On 04/27/20, Governor John Bel Edwards extended his "Stay-at-Home Order" until May 15, 2020. As a result, LSBEP has extended the fee exemption for "APPLICATION FOR AUTHORIZATION TO PROVIDE TELE-SUPERVISION TO PSYCHOLOGY TRAINEES/UNLICENSED ASSISTANTS TO PSYCHOLOGISTS" until June 30, 2020.
 - b) Additionally, beginning March 11, 2020, through until June 30, 2020, the requirement that at least 50% of approved tele-supervision of trainees and assistants be provided in-person has been waived. All other supervision requirements remain the same (e.g., minimum supervision time requirements, appropriateness of activities delegated to assistants and trainees, etc.).
- 2) On 04/27/20, Governor John Bel Edwards clarified that Louisiana was not in a position to enter Phase I according to the CMS guidelines "[Re-opening Facilities to Provide Non-emergency Non-COVID-19 Healthcare: Phase I](#)" released on 04/19/20. However, the Governor's May 15th extension (<https://gov.louisiana.gov/home/>) and the April 24, 2020 – LDH [Clarification to the "Amended and Updated" LDH Order #2020-Covid19-ALL-010](#) (effective April 27, 2020) make clear that "Healthcare workers" and "Mental health workers" are essential.
- 3) As psychologists consider provision of services under the current orders/guidelines, the following decision tree should be applied:
- a) Continue Telehealth when the provision of services can be implemented safely and meet the same standard of care as an in-person visit.

- i) See LSBEP WEBSITE for guidelines Telepsychology and HIPPA standards in response to COVID19)
- ii) Regarding the definition of “same standard of care” that must be met when moving to a telehealth modality. It may be the case, and it is likely that to some degree, the care provided via telehealth is different from in-person care. That does not mean the standard of care is compromised. Examples may include adjustment of treatment goals to suit the current context or postponement/telehealth modification of non-emergent assessment/evaluation. The decision to provide in-person services must be justified by a careful and serious assessment of all associated risks and benefits. The associated risks are not exclusive to the provider or the patient/client alone. The Order specifically requires that consequences to the healthcare system be considered in this decision-making process. Providers should ask themselves if the services they plan on providing in-person are worth the risk to themselves, their clients, and the community at large. There are situations where this may be the case, and as is our obligation at any point in time, psychologists must provide justification for their clinical decision-making.
- b) Continue to postpone cases that can safely be postponed.
- c) In-person treatment may continue on a case-by-case basis, if in the professional judgment of the psychologist the following criteria are met:
 - i) It is determined that the patient has an “emergency medical condition” referenced in [LDH Order #2020-Covid19-ALL-010](#) (Amended and Updated on April 20, 2020)
 - ii) It is determined that the condition is “Time-sensitive” as defined in the April 24, 2020 – LDH [Clarification to the “Amended and Updated” LDH Order #2020-Covid19-ALL-010](#) (effective April 27, 2020).
- d) If it is determined that the criteria outlined in “c” above are met according to the Amended and Updated LDH Order:
 - i) All providers should make every effort to follow PPE, social distancing and environmental cleaning recommendations outlined by the CDC to protect their patients and staff both during procedures and business operations.
 - ii) PPE needs and stockpile should be determined by the medical professional performing the procedure and should correspond to the CDC guidance for the particular procedure being performed: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>
 - iii) At time of appointment, screen the patient for COVID-19 symptoms and test (or refer for testing) if appropriate, and postpone symptomatic patients.
 - iv) Patients and staff should comply with social distancing before and up to the procedure
- 4) ASPPB has advised that PearsonVUE testing centers are scheduled to open on May 1st at reduced capacity to follow local social distancing guidelines. A limited number of new appointments in May are now reserved for essential services professionals. **Candidates MUST login and choose a new date and time at an actual testing center.** Candidates whose exams are affected by this change will be notified by Pearson VUE, as well as ASPPB. Currently, all testing centers are scheduled to be open at full capacity on June 1st. Additional details can be found at:
 - ASPPB’s website: <https://www.asppb.net/page/pearsonCOVID19updates> and
 - Pearson VUE: <https://home.pearsonvue.com/coronavirus-update>

LSBEP again thanks Louisiana Psychologists for stepping up to the challenges in applying technology to deliver psychological services to their patients and clients safely, while respecting the health and well-being of their patients/clients, the people with whom they work, themselves, as well as the individuals who have no other choice but to be exposed to COVID19. Our Ethical Standards are established for the welfare and protection of the individuals and groups with whom psychologists work. Therefore, our charge is to think of others before ourselves and to consider all risks when determining how to provide vital care to our clients and patients. Emergency Orders and Proclamations from Federal, State and Local Governments impose stricter but necessary restrictions and guidelines impacting the delivery of

psychological services for the time being. History will remember our actions or inactions at this time. Let us remember why we all chose this profession and be on the side of history that aligns with the health and well-being of all people.

Sincerely,

LSBEP Executive Committee

Koren Boggs, Ph.D., Chair

Amy Henke, Psy.D., Vice Chair

Jaime T. Monic, Executive Director