



WHAT'S INSIDE:

- [Letter from the President](#)
- [Letter from the Editor](#)
- [Join TAMFT](#)
- [Stand Together: What Texas MFTs Need to Know About the 89th Legislative Session](#)
- [Legislative Committee Needs You!](#)
- [Committee Updates](#)
- [Volunteers Needed](#)
- [Student Corner](#)
- [2025 TAMFT Conference](#)
- [Beyond The Couch: A TAMFT Podcast](#)
- [CEU Opportunities](#)



WINTER 2025 NEWSLETTER

**MOBILIZING TEXAS MFT ADVOCACY
FOR LEGISLATIVE REFORM**

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TAMFT PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

CARLOS PEREZ, PH.D., LPC, LMFT

To all TAMFT members:

The Legislative Corner of Our License

When I first received my license, I didn't realize how important the legislative side of our profession was and still is. So many different areas of our practice and field are influenced by what happens through legislative decisions. From billing to diagnosing, telehealth to gender-affirming care, insurance to student loan forgiveness, the formation of BHEC...I could go on...these are all legislatively driven.

Our more recent efforts for this legislative session include license reciprocity. We have officially joined with AAMFT and their Access MFT campaign to fight for license reciprocity across all states. This is a big deal. We want to create a model where our MFT qualifications can be applied to a license in other states. And we want your help.

Our 2025 TAMFT conference will also include our Day at the Dome, where we take a trip to the capitol and speak to our representatives on behalf of our organization. If you haven't participated in this, you should strongly consider it. The day before our conference, we will have a quick pre-session (CEs available), explaining our top priorities during this legislative session. Other than license portability, we're focusing on issues like LMFT-Associates being able to bill for Medicaid, treatment for Autism Spectrum Disorders under health care plans, following the LPC Compact, and gender-affirming care, among others. We will have a briefing on how to approach our representatives, what to say, and which bills we want their support for.

If there was ever a time to support our license, our organization, and our profession at large, this is the time to do it.

There's a larger picture to this, though; there's more to this. Supporting TAMFT's legislative efforts is also about supporting each other. Yes, it's about fighting for our license, but it's also about caring for each other, wanting the best for each other, and wanting to see ourselves succeed. So, I strongly urge you to consider joining us for our Day at the Dome and help us promote our organization.

This will be a busy legislative session, and we have a great team in place to be sure we're all up to date with how it evolves. Our Legislative Committee is already working hard to prepare, our lobbyist is pouring over everything we're following, and now all we need is you there with us. We can't wait to see you all there.

Cheers,

Carlos Perez, Ph.D., LPC, LMFT
President, 2024 TAMFT Board of Directors



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

ASHLEY MONTEZ, LMFT ASSOCIATE, TAMFT ASSOCIATE REPRESENTATIVE

Happy New Year TAMFT Family and Friends!

I hope this message finds you well and excited about what 2025 will bring! As we launch into a brand-new year, I want to take a moment to thank you for your support and engagement throughout the past year. Your contributions—whether through active participation, sharing expertise, or supporting our initiatives—have been instrumental in advancing our mission of TAMFT and strengthening our network across the state. Thank you for your continued partnership!

In this edition of our quarterly newsletter, we have exciting news and opportunities to share with you. Updates from our committees, upcoming events, CEU opportunities, and a special feature about what you need to know this legislative season. We aim to keep you informed as our field continues to shift and shape. As an organization, we are excited about the mobilization of MFTs across Texas to make our voices heard at Day at the Dome, gathering as a collective body to influence the future of our profession. It is the perfect precursor to our TAMFT Annual Conference: *Shaping the Future: Advancing Relationships Through Systemic Advocacy* in Austin!

We are here to support you in your practice, professional, and educational endeavors, providing resources, insights, and a platform for growth and collaboration. We recognize the diverse needs of our members, from students just beginning to the most experienced professionals. Whether you are looking for mentorship, continuing education, or ways to give back, TAMFT, as a community, is here for you.

Thank you for your continued commitment to excellence in Marriage and Family Therapy across the Lone Star State!

Happy Reading!

Warm regards,

Ashley Montez, M.S., LMFT Associate
Supervised by James Kelly Barnett, Ph.D., LMFT-S, LPC-S



CHECK OUT TAMFT MERCHANDISE

NEW



All proceeds
benefit
Family PAC!

**SNAG YOUR 2025 CONFERENCE GEAR TODAY!
T-SHIRTS, HOODIES, TANKS & MORE!**



JOIN TAMFT TODAY!

By joining TAMFT, you show your commitment to advancing marriage and family therapy in Texas

Other member benefits include:

- Involvement in legislation that directly impacts your career
- Access to Texas-based attorney with free consultations
- 12 free CEUs each year, plus bonus webinars (\$360 VALUE)
- Discounts on conferences, online courses, tuition/services and more
- Networking with like-minded individuals



TAMFT.org/Join-TAMFT

Cover your monthly EMR cost with just 1 appointment



No, really.

A screenshot of the Jane EMR interface. The main view is a calendar for May 9th. The calendar shows appointments for Jonathan Morris (Acupuncture) and Zoey Swift (Acupuncture / Massage Therapy). A callout box highlights an appointment for Ronnie Simmons at 12:00 - 1:00 PM for an Initial Assessment and Treatment. On the right, there is a video session window titled "Online Video Session" showing two participants: Maya Lopez-Chapman and Hudson Crow. The interface includes navigation tabs for Reminders, Wait List, Shifts, Resources, and Rooms, and a search bar for Patient Search.

Explore Jane's new pricing plans
for budget-friendly clinic management.

[See our pricing](#)

STAND TOGETHER: WHAT TEXAS MFTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE 89TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION

A LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE BY: Leila Anderson, LMFT-S, LCDC, C-DBT



Dear TAMFT Members,

As the 89th Texas Legislature convenes on January 14, 2025, we face both challenges and opportunities that will shape the future of our profession. Legislative decisions made in this session will influence our ability to serve clients, protect the integrity of our license, and advocate for equitable mental health access across the state. To make our voices heard, we need your help. TAMFT's collective strength depends on the proactive engagement of its members.

KEY DATES TO WATCH

The Texas legislative process moves quickly, making it essential to understand important deadlines:

- January 14: Session begins.
- March 14: Deadline to file non-local bills.
- May 28: Final day for legislative consideration of bills.

These milestones mark key moments when your advocacy can make the greatest difference.

WHY PROACTIVE ADVOCACY MATTERS

Advocacy is about more than reacting to threats—it's about shaping a future where LMFTs thrive and where Texans have better access to mental health care. This is particularly crucial as other professions occasionally challenge our scope of practice.

Take, for example, the Texas Medical Association's (TMA) 2008 effort to strip LMFTs of the ability to diagnose. This move wasn't just a threat to LMFTs' professional autonomy; it was an existential risk to our role in the mental health field. If successful, it would have relegated LMFTs to secondary providers, reducing our ability to deliver comprehensive care to families and communities.

TAMFT, with support from members like you, mounted a coordinated advocacy campaign. We educated lawmakers, mobilized grassroots support, and presented compelling evidence about LMFTs' training and expertise. The result? We preserved our right to diagnose, a critical victory for our profession and the clients we serve.

Today, we must remain vigilant. Legislative sessions bring new proposals that could limit our scope or increase regulatory burdens. Being proactive—engaging legislators early, building relationships, and sharing our stories—ensures that LMFTs are part of the conversation rather than responding after decisions are made.

WHAT WE'RE FIGHTING FOR

This session, TAMFT has outlined clear priorities to strengthen our profession and expand access to care for all Texans. These include:

1. Interstate Licensure and Portability

In collaboration with AAMFT, we're working to create streamlined pathways for LMFTs to practice across state lines. With the rise of telehealth, these efforts will expand access to care and reduce administrative barriers for therapists.

2. Insurance Reimbursement and Mental Health Parity

LMFTs deserve equitable reimbursement rates from insurers. This session, TAMFT will advocate for policies that recognize the value of mental health care and ensure fair compensation for providers.

3. Expanding the Workforce Pipeline

Texas faces a significant mental health workforce shortage, particularly in underserved areas. TAMFT supports initiatives to fund tuition reimbursement, increase workforce diversity, and promote LMFT careers statewide.

4. Reducing Barriers to Access

Expanding care for marginalized populations is a core priority. By advocating for collaborative care models and reducing systemic barriers, we can ensure all Texans have access to the mental health services they need.



THE ROLE OF LMFTS IN ADVOCACY

While TAMFT's leadership and lobbyists play a critical role in legislative advocacy, the involvement of individual members is just as important. Legislators want to hear directly from their constituents—people who live and work in their districts. Personal stories and experiences from LMFTs bring the data and policy discussions to life, showing lawmakers how their decisions impact real people.

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED:

1. Contact Your Legislators

Introduce yourself as an LMFT and constituent. Share a story about how proposed legislation affects your practice and your clients. Be concise, factual, and specific—legislators appreciate clear action requests, such as voting in favor of a particular bill.

2. Volunteer to Be a Legislative Witness

TAMFT has set a goal of identifying at least 60 MFTs who are willing to be “on call” for periods of time during the legislative session to testify on behalf of bills that support our profession. We need your voice to help shape important legislation, including license portability and increased awareness of mental health services. Our lobbyist, Tris Castañeda, will provide support and guidance throughout the process. Join us in making a difference!

[CLICK HERE TO VOLUNTEER!](#)

3. Attend Day at the Dome

TAMFT's Day at the Dome is your chance to meet lawmakers face-to-face at the Capitol. These meetings are an invaluable opportunity to build relationships and advocate for our shared priorities.

4. Support the Family PAC

TAMFT's Political Action Committee (PAC) amplifies our voices by supporting lawmakers who champion mental health initiatives. Even small donations make a difference when combined with contributions from other members.

5. Stay Informed and Engaged

Follow TAMFT's updates throughout the session. Join advocacy campaigns, attend webinars, and collaborate with colleagues to strengthen our collective efforts.

LESSONS FROM THE PAST

History has shown us the power of advocacy. In addition to defeating the TMA's diagnostic challenge, TAMFT has successfully:

- Secured funding for mental health initiatives that directly benefit LMFTs and clients.
- Protected the LMFT license from efforts that weaken its scope or standing.
- Advanced public awareness of the critical role LMFTs play in Texas's mental health system.

These victories didn't happen by chance—they were the result of proactive planning, member engagement, and strategic action.



POTENTIAL CHALLENGES THIS SESSION

The 89th Legislature brings a new political landscape, with 21% of House members being newly elected. This influx of legislators means educating lawmakers about our profession will be more important than ever. Additionally, partisanship continues to shape debates on mental health policy, requiring TAMFT to build coalitions and foster bipartisan support.

Other challenges include ongoing efforts by competing professions to expand their scopes of practice in ways that could encroach on LMFTs' roles. Keeping an eye on pre-filed bills and engaging early in the legislative process will be crucial to protecting our profession.

WHY ADVOCACY IS A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Advocacy isn't just about protecting our license—it's about ensuring that Texans have access to high-quality mental health care. When we speak up, we're advocating not only for ourselves but also for the individuals, couples, and families who rely on our services.

By sharing your expertise and experiences with legislators, you help them understand the unique value LMFTs bring to mental health care. Together, we can ensure that our profession continues to grow and thrive, meeting the needs of Texas' diverse communities.

TAKE ACTION TODAY

Visit TAMFT's website for advocacy resources, legislative updates, and tips for contacting your representatives. Make plans to join us for Day at the Dome, and consider contributing to the Family PAC.

The future of our profession depends on all of us. Let's stand together to protect and advance marriage and family therapy in Texas.

TAMFT NEEDS YOUR VOICE AT THE TEXAS CAPITOL!



FamilyPAC

Texas Association for Marriage & Family Therapy

JOIN US IN AUSTIN AND BE THE CHANGE OUR COMMUNITY NEEDS!

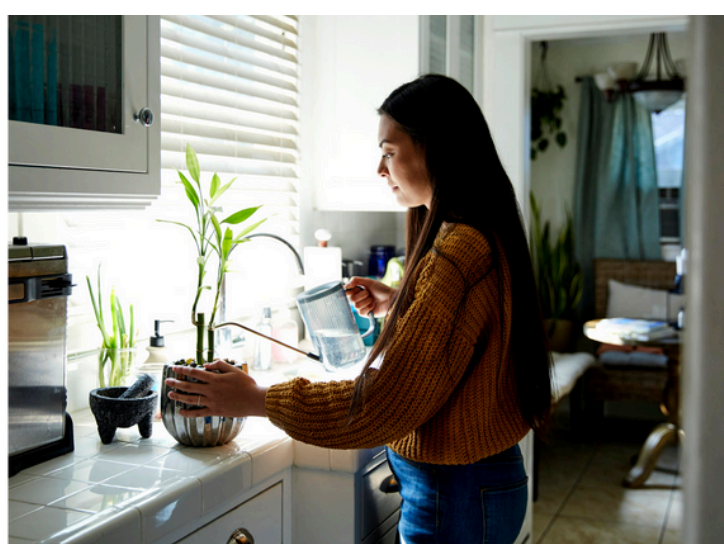
We're seeking dedicated volunteers to testify on bills supporting our clients and profession. Your testimony can make a real difference in shaping policy in Texas.

Your voice matters.



VOLUNTEER TODAY!

**THE NEXT LEGISLATIVE SESSION WILL BE
JANUARY 14, 2025 - JUNE 2, 2025**



Education That Supports the Whole You

National University's Whole Human Education™ philosophy means we holistically support our students throughout their journey. With our services, you'll get the help you need to support your professional and personal goals. Our Five Pillars of Support help you break through barriers during your journey and achieve your education goals.

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TAMFT Members receive a **15% tuition reduction scholarship** on associates, bachelors, masters and doctoral programs at NU.

[Learn More](#)



COMMITTEE UPDATES

ETHICS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Members: Paula Boros, co-Chair; Angela Hayes, co-Chair; Layla Scott, Board Liaison; Michael Flynn; Aaron Maleare; Felicia Holloway; Caleb Carroll; Ari Peñalosa Mammen; JoAngeli Kasper

There are so many ways to advocate for our profession and our clients and participating in the legislative process is only one of those ways. We also advocate through continued training, by showing up for our clients, through self-reflection, through volunteer work, and so much more. The ESJ Committee is advocating by working to make the TAMFT a more inclusive organization and provide resources for both our volunteers and our members.

We will soon be hosting a virtual Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) for Organizations training with Brittney Tolar. Our goal is for all TAMFT volunteers to take the training either live or virtually and to also make the training available for our members and the public. At a time where there is a lot of push back against DEIJ initiatives, TAMFT is dedicated to fostering an environment that values and upholds the principles of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) in all aspects of our profession.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE UPDATE

Members: Anna Thomison, Chair; Layla Scott, Board Liaison; Mi'cah Ducros; Hannah McKinnies; Raymond Gao; Rae Morris; Misty Schmidt; Denitra Crowder; Zachary Trevino; Ashley Montez



Hello from the Membership Committee!

We've had a busy few months, and we're excited to share what we've been working on.

First, we successfully completed the Student Membership Drive in November, bringing 31 new student members into our organization. We are eager to partner with the Student Association to engage and connect these new members, ensuring they become active participants and that we continue to listen to their needs.

Additionally, we've been hard at work creating a membership survey to better understand how we can engage our members more effectively this year. Keep an eye out for this survey in the coming months – your feedback will be invaluable!

We've also been focused on integrating the Communications Committee as a subcommittee under Membership. Our goal is to assess how we can collaborate more effectively with our members, leveraging their expertise to enhance their overall membership experience with TAMFT.

We look forward to the continued growth and success of our efforts and to engaging with all of you throughout the year!

TAMFT IS SEEKING NEW MEMBERS TO JOIN THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE AND ITS VARIOUS SUBCOMMITTEES.

YOU WOULD BE A GREAT FIT FOR THIS COMMITTEE IF YOU ARE:

- Passionate about your professional identity as a Marriage and Family Therapist and interested in connecting to other MFTs by building a state-wide, inclusive professional community.
- Desirous of expanding TAMFT's membership base within each membership category.
- Proficient with writing and/or developing social media content to engage our membership body in new and creative ways.

SUBCOMMITTEE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	APPROXIMATE TIMEFRAME
Recruitment & Retention (3 Members)	Survey development to identify member interests, needs, and barriers to membership and retention.	Ongoing. Surveys are developed annually and issued in Nov-Dec timeframe.
Awards (3 Members)	In partnership with Conference Committee to nominate and select TAMFT members to be recognized as annual award recipients.	Call for Nominations: Nov-Dec Review of nominations: January Ordering of Awards: February
Student Membership Drive (3 Members)	Annual Fall competition amongst Texas universities to recruit graduate students to join TAMFT as student members.	Planning: Summer Communication with universities: August Launch: September-October
Mentorship Program (3 Members)	Launch a program linking experienced LMFTs and LMFT-Supervisors to LMFT-Associates, new(er) fully licensed individuals, and less experienced supervisors for professional growth.	Not yet established. Proposed implementation during Annual Conference.
Communications (3 Members)	Newly adopted subcommittee that develops quarterly themed newsletters and engages the members through marketing tactics.	Quarterly Newsletters: Winter – January Spring – April Summer – July Fall – October Social Media – Ongoing

[LEARN MORE](#)



GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE

Members: *Layla Scott, Chair; Carlos Perez; Jason Martin; Angela Hayes; Joanna Mendez-Pounds, Elections Committee Chair*

The governance committee is working on the organization of all current and future TAMFT committee structures. With the elections this spring, we will ensure all bylaws and each committee roster is up to date along with detailed descriptions of each committee's function for future board members. For the new board members coming on this election season, the Governance committee will be sure your transition onto the board is seamless and quick. It's our goal to make your onboarding experience easy for all new board members.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE UPDATE

Members: *Kelsey Austin, Chair & Board Liaison; Brandon Gardenhire; Adam Jones; Neli Morris; Karen Diliberti; Adam Jones*

DAY AT THE DOME: FEBRUARY 26TH, 2025
CONFERENCE: FEBRUARY 27TH-28TH, 2025



The 2025 annual TAMFT conference will be here in just a couple more months! The Conference Committee worked hard to review and accept workshops as well as publish the tentative schedule for the conference earlier this year. This allows our members and conferencegoers to plan ahead and register with excitement for the topics being presented. Once registered, attendees can use Sched (our conference app) to select the workshops they plan to attend. The next step for conference planning will be the poster presentation reviewing process. We can't wait to read through this year's submissions. Lots of details are coming together, and we are so excited to connect with everyone in Austin soon!

EDUCATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

Members: *Leila Anderson, co-Chair & Board Liaison; Jose Mata co-Chair; Robyn Flores, Secretary; Alycia DeGraff, Christopher McClung; Michael Argumaniz-Hardin, Federico Mendez; Paul Massingill; Denitra Crowder*

The Education Committee is committed to delivering valuable monthly education to our members for a total of 26 CEUs every two years. Attending any of the available training opportunities is a great way to continue your education, learn from colleagues, and feel connected to the field.

The Education Committee is working hard to plan webinars through 2025. December's speaker, Dr. Sonja Sutherland, presented her topic titled "Social Justice Ethics with Families." This webinar explored important questions therapists should consider related to social justice in clinical practice, as well as ways to apply social justice ethics to family case conceptualization. If you missed the live webinar, the session was recorded for you to access at a later date. Sonja Sutherland, PhD, LPC, ACS, BC-TMH, is a Clinical Associate Faculty member at Adams State University. Dr. Sutherland trains clinicians and supervisors, nationally and internationally, in ethics, supervision, the development of cross-cultural responsiveness in clinical and supervisory work, and racial trauma.

With the legislative year upon us, you can revisit October's recorded panel discussion titled "Why We Advocate: Understanding the Value of Legislative Action for MFTs" or join us in January for Tris Castañeda's legislation-focused webinar. Upcoming topics are focused on private practice development and systemic practice.

STUDENT CORNER

TSAMFT BOARD UPDATE

Members: Lizee Love, President; JoAngeli Kasper, President-Elect; Emily Saldivar, Secretary; Justin Rivas, Treasurer; Rae Morris, Social Media Manager; Cheryl Nichols, Outreach Manager; Caleb Carroll, Ethics and Social Justice Chair

The Student Association hopes you are staying warm! We wrapped up 2024 with some exciting events. We ended the year with our December Peer 2 Peer meeting, which included a test prep session hosted by AATBS Tutoring. We look forward to launching our Student Research Database to connect with other student MFTs across the state with shared clinical and research interests. With the 2025 Conference approaching quickly, we have our final events scheduled.

- On Saturday, 1/25/25, at 10 am, we will have our final TSAMFT Board Meeting.
- On Saturday, 2/1/25, at 10 am, we will have our February Peer2Peer meeting to discuss searching for internships and jobs.
- And finally, join us at the conference on Thursday, 2/27/25, at 12:45 pm to connect in person and launch the new Student Board. The room will be announced later!

Lizee Love, TSAMFT President

Looking for a
Supervisor?
TAMFT can help!

CLICK HERE



Marriage and Family Therapy National Exam Prep

TAMFT has put together a suite of resources to help students prepare for the national licensure exam, including recordings of our Exam Prep Workshop, a Practice Exam & Answer Explanations, and an MFT Terms Glossary.



SIGN UP TODAY

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!



DAY AT THE DOME: FEBRUARY 26TH, 2025

CONFERENCE: FEBRUARY 27TH-28TH, 2025

**THANK YOU TO OUR
CONFERENCE SPONSOR:**



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SUITE

A graphic featuring a central cluster of hands in various colors (red, orange, yellow, brown) with hearts on their palms, set against a background of a city skyline. Two large blue hands with hearts on their palms are positioned on the left and right sides, framing the central cluster. The text "2025 CALL FOR CONFERENCE VOLUNTEERS" is written in large, bold, orange letters with a blue outline, centered over the hands.

2025 CALL FOR CONFERENCE VOLUNTEERS

Volunteering at the 2025 TAMFT Annual Conference is a rewarding way to engage with the community, network with industry professionals, and support an event that drives growth in the field of marriage and family therapy. As a volunteer, you'll play a key role in ensuring a smooth, successful event while also earning access to a discounted conference ticket. ***Potential volunteers must apply for a position.**

VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS:

- **Arrival Time:** You must arrive at the registration desk by 7:00 AM on the day you are scheduled to volunteer. Here, you'll receive specific instructions on your volunteer activities for the day. It should take no more than 15 minutes.
- **Discounted Conference Ticket:** If selected, you will be emailed a code to receive your discounted pricing. If you did not receive it, please email us at info@tamft.org.
- **Shift Commitment:** To qualify for the discounted conference ticket, **you must sign up for at least three (3) volunteer shifts** during the conference. There will still be plenty of time to watch excellent presentations throughout the conference!
- **How to Sign Up:** You will receive an email with a link to sign up for the available volunteer spots.

**Please note that only 20 volunteers are selected on a first-come, first-served basis, with TAMFT Student Members given a priority.*



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UPCOMING LIVE WEBINAR:

Why Solo Practices Succeed or Fail

1 CEU



February 14, 2025 | 12-1:00pm CT | Live Via



Jordan Harris, Ph.D., LMFT-S, LPC-S and
Paul Peterson, LMFT, LPC