



March 14, 2017

## What is the future of EBCAMFT?

Dear Members,

The East Bay CAMFT Chapter Board is asking you to participate in a discussion about the future of our local chapter organization.

The East Bay Therapist organization has existed since the early 1970s; it became a Chapter of CAMFT in 1985. In recent years, our East Bay Board has spent enormous time and energy on issues of CAMFT-related governance. We fought for more member inclusion in decision-making, against CAMFT's hesitation to speak out on behalf of marriage equality, against secretive attempts to change the Bylaws, and we were puzzled by the mysterious recall of a President-Elect, among many other concerns. We complained about the level of secrecy surrounding State Board meetings, and the lack of transparency overall. We saw CAMFT lobbying failures in the passing of AB1775, and a lack of initiative in regards to new and strict BBS telehealth guidelines. We do not see CAMFT addressing the most important issues to its members, such as making psychotherapy a well-paid and well-respected profession.

In early 2016, the East Bay Chapter was forced to sign a new Chapter agreement with CAMFT. The East Bay Board decided to do this only on a probationary basis. The new Chapter agreement extends CAMFT's control over the chapters, mostly for the purpose of CAMFT's risk management.

It is time to consider a new step: Our Board proposes that we, as an organization of East Bay Therapists, abandon our status as a CAMFT Chapter. We are an independent 501 c.6 non-profit organization, and we can continue to provide member services without the CAMFT affiliation. The East Bay Board believes that we can do more for our members if we are fully independent from CAMFT.

The East Bay Board has discussed the situation and is considering that we, as an organization of East Bay therapists, terminate our status as a CAMFT Chapter. We are an independent 501(c)(6) nonprofit organization, and we can continue to provide member services without the CAMFT affiliation. The East Bay Board believes the 'leaving CAMFT option' can do more for our members if we are fully independent of CAMFT. We are committed to an organizational culture of transparency, democracy, and inclusiveness that we do not see at the state level.

**PLEASE NOTE:** This change does not mean that individual members lose their CAMFT membership. You would continue to be a member of both organizations.

Becoming an independent organization offers the following advantages to us:

- As an independent organization, we could accept local therapists who are not CAMFT members. We currently cannot do this by CAMFT rules. Many therapists would like to join the local community, but they don't want to join CAMFT. Also, many therapists have left CAMFT in recent years, due to the above-mentioned struggles. They can now rejoin our organization again.
- We can expand our territory throughout the Bay Area and connect to the large San Francisco and Marin therapist communities. An integrated Bay Area wide organization of therapists makes more sense than the current fragmentation into four chapters.
- This will also allow us to boost membership and provide more member services.
- We can engage in lobbying for the interests of therapists, without having to defer or wait for CAMFT to take action.
- We can now address the problems of insurance reimbursements and health care reform, including Single Payer options, in a different way.
- The East Bay Board will be free from time-consuming debates and activities related to CAMFT and can turn its focus to creating more opportunities for members.

An organizational separation from CAMFT will only be the beginning of a new process. We can utilize the strengths of our community to form a new startup organization in the field of psychotherapy. We can build connections to other organizations, provide more opportunities for members, and inform them better about the legal and political landscape in which we practice.

The Board would like to engage the membership in a discussion about this proposed change of status. We are calling a **General Membership Meeting**, and will consider a vote on this issue after the meeting.

**Your participation is important.** Please let us know what you think by calling (510) 692-9936, or by sending an email to [admin@ebcamft.org](mailto:admin@ebcamft.org).

Sincerely,

*The Board of the East Bay Chapter of CAMFT*