

Requesting ACBHD BBS-Candidate Provider Designation Effective April 14, 2025

Purpose

The process below was created by Alameda County Behavioral Health Department (ACBHD) to allow Marriage Family Therapists (MFT), Professional Clinical Counselors (PCC) and Clinical Social Work (CSW) candidates who are waiting for their registration numbers from the Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) to submit claims to Medi-Cal as Registered/Associate providers (e.g. AMFT, APCC, ACSW).

Scope

This process is in scope for ACBHD county and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) Specialty Mental Health Service (SMHS) and Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System (DMC-ODS) service providers.

Background Information

BBS 90-Day Rule

CSW, MFT and PCC candidates who have graduated from a master's degree program must apply to BBS for a registration number within 90 days of their degree award date. Per the [BBS - 90-Day Rule \(ca.gov\)](#), BBS allows these individuals to obtain supervision hours while their registration application is being processed.

Per the [BBS FAQ](#) document, hours are only accepted under the "90-day-rule" if they are obtained at a workplace that, prior to the applicant gaining hours, required live scan fingerprinting. Candidates must provide a copy of the processed "State of California Request for Live Scan Service" form (provided by their employer) with their Application for Licensure. A copy of the processed form is the ONLY acceptable documentation specified in law. If a copy of the processed Request for Live Scan Service form cannot be provided, the experience hours will only count from the date the Associate registration is issued.

DHCS Changes in Response to BBS 90-Day Rule

Per [BHIN 24-023](#), Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) changed the definition of "registered" providers to include individuals who are *in the process of* obtaining registration as CSW, MFT and PCC candidates, as well as individuals whose registrations as candidates for these licensure types have been approved by BBS.

This means that CSW, MFT and PCCs who are in the process of obtaining their registration number from BBS may claim Medi-Cal as registered providers while their associate registration application is being processed and before they have received their registration number. However, in the event the

application is not approved by BBS, the services provided by these individuals are not Medi-Cal reimbursable.

DHCS requires Medi-Cal behavioral health delivery systems to “obtain and maintain documentation to verify that the candidate’s BBS application has been submitted and is pending”, and “subsequently verify that the registration is approved.”

ACBHD Process Changes

The process below was created to accommodate the above changes.

New Provider Designation

A new Professional Suffix/License Type of **BBS-Candidate** has been created to capture the status of master’s level candidates who are in the process of obtaining their registration numbers from BBS and completing supervised experience toward licensure.

The **SmartCare Staff ID # Request (MHS and SUD) e-Forms** have been updated as follows:

- **New Professional Suffix: BBS-Candidate**
- **New options for Type of Applicant: MFT-Candidate, PCC-Candidate, MSW-Candidate**

● Professional Suffix (License Type/Degree):	BBS-Candidate	?
● Type of Applicant: (Prof Suffix for BBS-Candidate):	MSW Candidate	
● Provider Taxonomy:		?

Changes to SmartCare

SmartCare has been set up to allow providers with the BBS-Candidate designation to bill as registered providers, with access to an expanded set of procedure codes, for a period of 180 days from the date of their application for associate registration to BBS.

ACBHD selected 180 days to allow sufficient time for applicants to receive their registration numbers. It is expected that a registration number will be obtained prior to 180 days.

Requesting the BBS-Candidate Designation

Agencies who have MFT/PCC/CSW candidates awaiting their BBS Registration numbers, may submit a SmartCare Staff ID # Request e-Form selecting BBS-Candidate for *Professional Suffix* and the appropriate candidate type for *Type of Applicant*.

The SmartCare Staff ID E-forms can be accessed using the links below. To use these links, the provider must be logged into the [County Network](#).

- SmartCare MHS Staff ID Form:
https://eforms3.acbhcs.org/lincdoc/doc/run/alameda/MHS_StaffNumber2
- SmartCare SUD Staff ID Form:

https://eforms3.acbhcs.org/lincdoc/doc/run/alameda/AOD_StaffNumber2

When completing the e-form, providers will be required to upload copies of the following two documents:

- Associate registration application submitted to the BBS
- The processed “State of California Request for Live Scan Service” form provided by their employer



Providers will be notified by ACBHD once their Staff ID designation has been updated and advised of the start and end date of the designation.

- **Start date** = The later of the date of BBS associate registration application or processed Live Scan.
- **End date** = 180 days from the start date of the BBS-Candidate designation

Once the new license type has been set up, providers may submit claims using procedure codes allowable for registered master’s level providers until the end date of the new designation, or sooner if the associate registration application is denied prior to that date.

Updating the BBS -Candidate Designation

Providers are required to submit a new (second) SmartCare Staff ID e-form updating their Professional Suffix/License Type as soon as they are notified of their application status and prior to the end date of their BBS-Candidate designation.

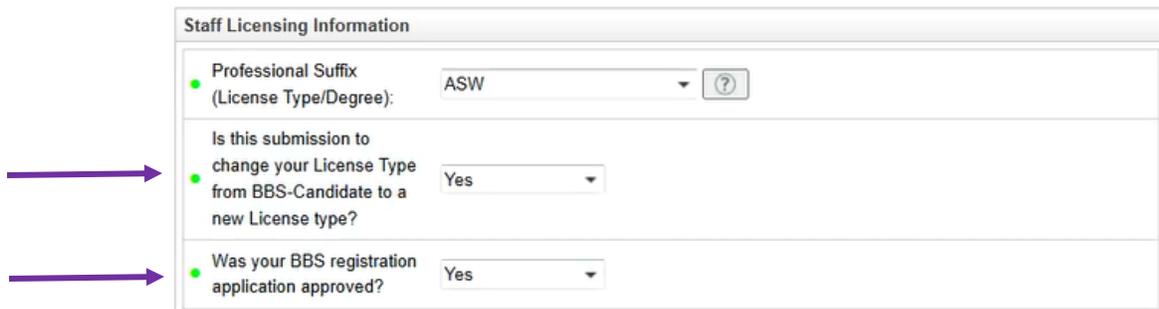


New fields have been added to the Staff ID e-form allowing users to add the needed information, including the status of the BBS associate registration application.

BBS Registration Application is Approved

The additional two questions in the screenshot below need to be completed when the new, second Staff ID e-form is submitted.

Once received, the provider’s designation will be changed, allowing them to continue submitting claims using procedure codes available to registered providers.



Staff Licensing Information

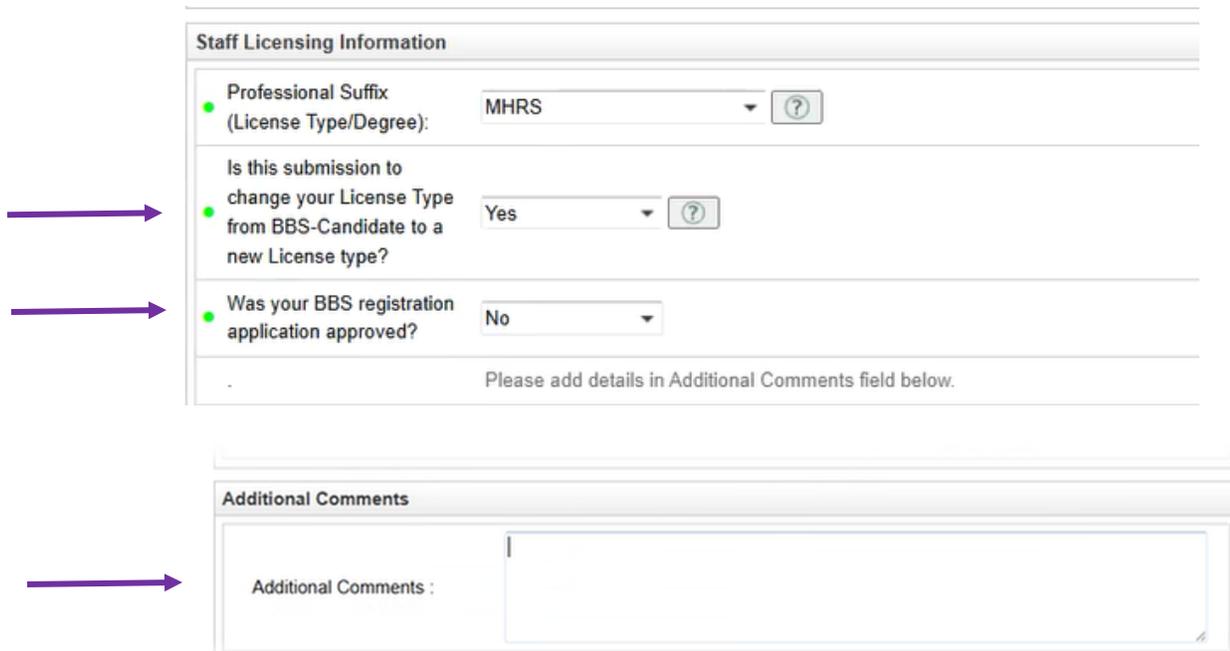
Professional Suffix (License Type/Degree): ASW

Is this submission to change your License Type from BBS-Candidate to a new License type? Yes

Was your BBS registration application approved? Yes

BBS Registration Application is Denied

If the associate registration application is denied by the BBS, the provider must submit a new (second) SmartCare Staff ID e-form updating their Professional Suffix/License type as appropriate and complete the additional questions related to their BBS registration application status, as seen in the screenshot below. Any additional information can be added in the Additional Comments field of the form, as seen in the screenshot below.



Staff Licensing Information

Professional Suffix (License Type/Degree): MHRS

Is this submission to change your License Type from BBS-Candidate to a new License type? Yes

Was your BBS registration application approved? No

Please add details in Additional Comments field below.

Additional Comments

Additional Comments :

Once the BBS-Candidate designation is changed, the provider will not be able to finalize their notes in Clinician’s Gateway or enter services in SmartCare and will need to contact ACBHD System Support for assistance: Email hcsasupport@acgov.org or call 510-817-0076 for urgent support.

In the event that services previously entered are out of scope for the provider’s updated license type, the provider will be contacted by ACBHD’s Billing and Benefits Support Unit to discuss next steps related to the submitted claims.