

CAMFT Emotional Support Dog Documentation Checklist

Effective January 1, 2022, California Health and Safety Code Section 122318 requires health care practitioners to meet specific criteria to provide documentation supporting patients' need for emotional support **dogs** ("ESDs"). The checklist below can help therapists ensure they are meeting the requirements necessary to provide such documentation:

- Do you have a valid, active license or associate registration?
 - *Practitioners with licenses or associate registrations that are inactive, retired, delinquent, or cancelled may not provide documentation related to patients' need for emotional support dogs.*¹
- Note: The BBS interprets this provision to allow associates with valid, active registrations to provide ESD documentation so long as their supervisors review and approve the documentation.*
- Are you licensed or registered to provide professional services in the state or country in which the treatment occurred (i.e. where the patient is located)?
 - *Practitioners providing documentation related to patients' need for ESDs must be "licensed to provide professional services within the scope of the license in the jurisdiction in which the documentation is provided."*²
- Have you been treating the patient requesting the ESD documentation for at least 30 days?
 - *To provide ESD documentation, practitioners must form therapist-patient relationships with individuals requesting the documentation at least 30 days prior to providing the documentation.*³
- Have you completed a clinical evaluation of the individual requesting ESD documentation regarding their need for an ESD?
 - *The evaluation must specifically focus on the patient's need for an ESD and be within the therapist's scope of competence.*⁴ *A general evaluation of the patient's clinical condition will not satisfy this criteria.*
- Have you notified the patient, verbally or in writing, that "knowingly and fraudulently representing oneself to be the owner or trainer of any canine licensed as, to be qualified as, or identified as, a guide, signal, or service dog is a misdemeanor violation of Section 365.7 of the Penal Code"?
 - *When providing patients with ESD documentation, practitioners must also give them this notice.*⁵
- Have you included your license/registration type, license/registration number, jurisdiction of licensure/registration (e.g. California), and the effective date of your licensure/registration in the ESD documentation you will be providing to your patient?
 - *The law requires that this information be included in the ESD documentation.*⁶ *Associates must include their supervisors' information.*

¹ Health and Safety Code Section 122318(a)(1).

² Health and Safety Code Section 122318(a)(2). The BBS has clarified that the “documentation is provided” in the jurisdiction where the patient is located. In other words, if the patient is physically located in California during treatment, the therapist must be licensed in California.

³ Health and Safety Code Section 122318(a)(3).

⁴ Health and Safety Code Section 122318(a)(4).

⁵ Health and Safety Code Section 122318(a)(5).

⁶ Health and Safety Code Section 122318(a)(1).