

**VIOLENT CRIMES COMPENSATION BOARD**  
**MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT GUIDELINES**  
**EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW**

**The State of Alaska’s Crime Victim Compensation Program**

The Violent Crimes Compensation Board was established in statute under AS. 18.67 in 1972 and received the first application for crime victim compensation in 1973. That year, the Board received 15 applications and compensated \$3,836.70. The program has continued to grow and in 1999 received 474 applications and compensated \$1,023,000.00 in compensation to eligible crime victims. The Board routinely compensates the mental health treatment costs for claimants that are not paid through other sources.

**Crime Victim Compensation Standards**

AS 18.67.070 states the Board should, insofar as practicable, formulate standards for uniform application of program provisions. Therefore, in 1999, the Board adopted a policy related to the compensation of mental health treatment costs. Please see Appendix A of the **Violent Crimes Compensation Board Mental Health Treatment Guidelines**.

While the adoption of this policy was a first step towards the implementation of mental health treatment guidelines for the State of Alaska’s crime victim compensation program, the policy alone did not meet identified issues of concern to the Board.

Therefore, the Board has formulated these guidelines for the following reasons:

1. To ensure equitable and fair compensation of counseling costs;
2. To standardize evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment plan documentation;
3. To inform mental health treatment providers regarding crisis intervention strategies;
4. To allow the provision of 1-6 sessions during the critical time for most victims;
5. To expedite the provision of mental health treatment during the victim's time of critical need;
6. To ensure the safety needs of victims are addressed;
7. To encourage victims in need of mental health treatment to seek it; and
8. To uphold the Board's adopted policy concerning the provision.

**Implementation of Guidelines**

The **Violent Crimes Compensation Board Mental Health Treatment Guidelines** are available in printed form from Board offices. Compliance with the guidelines will initially be voluntary. Approximately one year after initial implementation, the Board will seek input from claimants and their mental health treatment providers regarding the guidelines. The Board will revise the guidelines as needed and may consider requiring compliance with the guidelines after due consideration of findings.

## **Mental Health Treatment Compensation**

The Board has awarded mental health treatment costs both as a result of residential treatment and out-patient services for many years. The Board has paid out the following on mental health treatment over the course of the last three federal years:

	<b><u>FFY99</u></b>	<b><u>FFY98</u></b>	<b><u>FFY97</u></b>
	\$111.5	\$101.0	\$73.9
<b>% Total of Budget</b>	8%	13%	8%

Over the past three years, the Board awarded 23 claims beyond the current policy amount for mental health treatment. For mental health service alone, the Board awarded one of these claims \$24,285.57, one \$11,175.00, one \$9,858.00, one \$7,035.00 and several around \$6,000.00. The average awarded for these 23 claims was \$5,686.34.

## **Purpose of Guidelines**

The Mental Health Treatment Guidelines (MHT Guidelines) meets the following Board objectives:

- (1) To uphold the Board's adopted guideline limitations on mental health award amounts;
- (2) To determine the cases which require mental health treatment beyond the policy limits;
- (3) To facilitate and expedite mental health counseling early in the healing process, e.g., victims in crisis;
- (4) To permit compensation of counseling costs without extensively employing "pre-approval" of awards;
- (5) To standardize the criteria by which claims requiring counseling beyond the policy limits are determined and documented; and
- (6) To establish criteria by which mental health counseling services can be evaluated, reported, and monitored.

## **Alaska Mental Health Board**

The draft guidelines have been reviewed by the Alaska Mental Health Board (AMHB). AMHB suggestions have been incorporated into the current draft.

## **Guidelines**

The guidelines include an introduction, initial response- assessment and documentation, information on treatment issues, and resources.