

May 16, 2017

House Bill 1183/Senate Bill 986

This is to inform you of the major changes made to the Social Work Practice Act, as a result of the bill passed in the General Assembly and recently signed by Governor Larry Hogan.

The Board spent the past two years reviewing the Social Work Practice Act to update the scope of practice, add improvements and clarify the language. The Board included a number of stakeholders to ensure input from the community.

The Bill becomes Law on October 1, 2017, but certain changes will not be effective until July 1, 2018 when the Board will have all regulations promulgated.

The Board will send you an official copy of the Statute in October/November, 2017. Keep in mind that most provisions will not impact the practice of Social Work until July 1, 2018.

A summary of the changes in this Bill is as follows:

- *The bill defines independent practice
- *The bill changes LGSW to LMSW (Licensed Master Social Worker) effective 7/1/18
- *The bill permits LMSW and LBSW to supervise under conditions specified in Regulations
- *The bill permits equivalent educational programs as approved by the Council on Social Work Education, for schools out of the US. This is current practice.
- *The bill introduces the concept of Behavioral Health Disorders which includes substance use disorders, addictive disorders, and mental disorders
- *The bill introduces "using technology" as set forth and further defined in Regulations
- *The bill defines private practice as only in the scope of practice of LCSW-C social workers
- *The bill defines reactivation, reinstatement and reissuance of licenses
- *The bill limits the appointed Board member from a Social Work BSW and MSW program to one term (4 years)
- *The bill clarifies that independent practice for LBSW and LMSW requires 3 years of supervised experience of at least 4500 hours with a minimum of 150 hours of periodic face-to-face supervision under terms and conditions as determined by Regulations
- *The bill enables LBSW and LMSW social workers who were licensed before January 1, 2008 and have actively practiced for at least 10 years to apply for independent practice status
- *The bill allows the use of the Rap Back Program of the FBI - once a licensee has a criminal background check the Board will be notified of any criminal behavior
- *Using the Central Repository data the Board will consider a number of issues including the "nature of the crime"
- *The Board will maintain a roster of all LBSW's and LMSW's who are approved to engage in independent practice

*Those LMSW's who currently engage in private practice will have until 1/1/20 to become licensed at the LCSW-C level or must discontinue private practice

*Beginning in 2021, a social worker renewing their license can submit the required materials for the criminal background check and attest that they have completed it. The Board will then renew the license while awaiting the final results

*The Board may issue a "cease and desist order" or obtain an injunction for anyone practicing social work without a license or identifying themselves as a social worker without a license (October 1, 2017)

*The bill removes the requirement of displaying the paper license (a practice discontinued years ago)

*The bill enables the board to assess civil fines for unlicensed practice in accordance with Regulations not exceeding \$50,000

*The Board will promulgate Regulations to make these changes by July 1, 2018

If you have questions about these changes you can email:

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Thank You