



BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK EXAMINER

Welcome from the Board Chair

Dear Colleagues,

I am so excited to introduce our new monthly newsletter to you. We have experienced lots of change at the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners (BSWE) in the past year. Many changes you will see throughout this edition of our newsletter. Not only have we welcomed a new Executive Director but four new staff members and four new board members as well.

I am Susan Coppage, chair of the Maryland BSWE. I am in my second year as chair and my seventh year on the Board. I am the Director of Queen Anne's County Department of Social Services and the Board representative for the Maryland Department of Human Services. It has certainly been a fulfilling and worthwhile experience thus far. I have learned so very much and encourage anyone that has the interest and time to contribute to BSWE to do so as it is an amazing opportunity to influence the progression of our profession.

We have so much to look forward to such as the possibility of Maryland enacting the Interstate Social Work Compact, which will provide us with the option to practice in other States that are members of the Compact. Check out <https://swcompact.org> for more information about the Compact.

As social workers we should critically reflect on our values, beliefs, and biases and actively work to eliminate oppressive systems and practices. Because of that, another exciting addition this year is that 3 of the required Category I continuing education units required for licensure renewal shall have anti-oppressive social work practice content focusing on race, culture, or equity, and include one or more of the following topics (i) cultural humility; (ii) social justice; (iii) racial equity; (iv) implicit bias; or (v) anti-racism practices. Many of us are already including CEUs that cover these topics, so it won't be much of an adjustment.

Keep your eye out for Maryland legislation during the next legislative session that will help us move our profession forward with an Interstate Compact.

Best Regards,

Susan Coppage, LCSW-C

Chair, MD Board of Social Work Examiners

September 2024: Issue I

Happening at the Board

Supervisors and Ethics Tutors Needed!

The Board is always looking for Supervisors and Ethics Tutors to support licensees who have violated the Social Work Practice act. This is rewarding work supporting other professionals. To qualify, you must:

1. Have a active Maryland license in good standing with a minimum of ten years of experience as a licensed social worker
2. Be a Board Approved LCSW or LCSW-C Supervisor with at least seven years of experience as a Supervisor
3. Have extensive training in Supervision to include (but not limited to) experience with client confidentiality; privileged communication; ethics; Maryland regulation governing social workers; and professional boundaries

Supervision and Ethics tutoring will be provided face to face.

If you are interested, please contact the Director of Compliance - Kara Brooks-Tyson, LCSW.

kara.brooks-tyson@maryland.gov

phone # 410-764-5901



September is National Recovery Month

by Kevin Meenan, DSW, MBA, LCSW-C

Recovery is Possible

September is National Recovery Month, which began in 1989 in recognition and observance of substance use disorder recovery and treatment practices. Observance of Recovery month has contributed to bringing much needed attention to the many ways people recover and improve their overall life quality (SAMHSA, 2024).

Social workers often take active roles in helping to provide compassionate direct care as part of interdisciplinary teams, reduce stigma, reform policies, and celebrate the successes of people dealing with substance use disorder and co-occurring mental health disorders. Alongside counselors, mental health professionals, doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, peer recovery specialists, support staff and program administrators, we get to be part of the solution!

We are called upon to help educate and process the many aspects of the addictive disease, to aid in the development of a recovery and relapse prevention plan, and to navigate the next steps in the treatment continuum. Understanding the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) criteria is imperative to determine what level of care someone needs based on the severity of the use disorder, their motivation for change, and ensuring that someone gets the right treatment, at the right time. Some individuals may need medication assisted treatment, short- or long-term residential care, and/or intensive outpatient counseling. Many would benefit from ongoing MH therapy. This means it is important to know how these many systems interact with one another and how the interdisciplinary approach to human services will benefit everyone on the treatment team. Social workers are trained for this!

Anyone who works in this part of the social work profession knows the challenges outside of the direct service work, from helping people to meet their basic needs linking them with social services for assistance with supplemental nutrition assistance programming (SNAP), temporary cash assistance (TCA), temporary disability assistance (TDAP), or ensuring access to continued treatment through access to Medicaid, to name a few. There are also the legal concerns, helping someone to link with the public defender's office or legal aid, employment or vocational training issues, linking with the department of rehabilitative services (DORS) or a supported employment program. Individuals may have gone months or even years without treating co-occurring medical and/or dental problems which may contribute to the stress associated with continued use. Some individuals are seeking assistance with child custody concerns, others educational concerns, and still more have additional financial concerns or additional familial concerns. Many experience all these concerns simultaneously. These are many (not all) of the secondary problems, recognized in the diagnosis part of our work as "Social elements impacting diagnosis." Social elements—social work!

While these myriad concerns and associated tasks raised in the preceding paragraphs may seem like a lot, the stress associated with the work we get to perform is nothing compared the lived experience of those dealing with substance use disorder every day. Remember when celebrating National Recovery Month, the work you do is greatly appreciated, the people we get to help are worth it, and you are making a difference in your community and in the world!

Important Dates to remember in honoring Recovery are National Overdose Awareness Day (August 31) and National Addiction Professionals Day (September 20). Check your local health department or provider websites for activities, events, or ways you may be able to get involved in celebrating Recovery!

Reference:

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration. (2024, August 16). *National Recovery Month*. <https://www.samhsa.gov/recovery-month>

"There is nothing permanent except change." - Heraclitus

Heraclitus was the Greek Philosopher who coined the term "Logos." Logos is a cosmic law based on reason. Heraclitus reasoned that everything in the universe was in a constant flux. Only change is real - nothing is permanent or stable. Even rocks change over time with the steady drip drip of water.

When applying "logos" to our profession, we must honor and respect "flux" and "change." Like the clients we serve, Social Workers are also in various states of "change" and "flux" as they move through their careers.

Our profession has grown. The impact we make has expanded. Social Workers are more likely to provide therapy via telehealth;

REMINDERS

RENEWALS

October 31st is fast approaching for all who renew this year! *Please DON'T wait until the last minute!*

Here is the link to online portal:

<https://mdbnc.health.maryland.gov/bswe/logon.aspx>

Remember, there are three options at renewal time:

- 1) RENEW the license
- 2) Place the license on INACTIVE status
- 3) Notify the Board that you DO NOT PLAN TO RENEW

are more likely to be involved in policy and social justice issues; and are more online than ever before. The populations we serve are more diverse. Social Workers are showing up in a variety of settings in both the private and public sectors.

With this in mind, the Board is making changes to be more responsive to our licensees. This digital monthly newsletter is a start.

In the upcoming months, look for updates on new Board Members, staff and more! We hope to educate you about the regulations that govern your license. If there is legislation in Annapolis that will impact the profession - we will let you know.

About me, I have 30 years of experience as a licensed Social Worker in MD. My career began working with the homeless and preventing evictions as a Social Work Associate (SWA) at Baltimore County DSS. With my master's degree, I worked with emotionally and behaviorally challenged children and adolescents at Maxim Healthcare and RICA Baltimore. For the last ten years, I was a member of an outstanding Behavioral Health team at the MD Department of Juvenile Services.

This new role is not clinical. Fortunately, before calling myself a Social Worker, I ran a small business and held jobs in Retail and Business Communications. While dealing with budgets and HR issues, I draw on that experience.

I am honored to serve this profession which has been so good to me over the years. And doing it all in the great state of Maryland - even better! Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

Karen Richards, LCSW-C

Executive Director, BSWE

Karen.richards2@maryland.gov

Do you have questions?? Answers can be found on our Renewal Webpage - click on the link below:

<https://health.maryland.gov/bswe/Pages/Renewal.aspx>

2024 SW BOARD APPROVED SUPERVISORS

If you are a Board Approved Supervisor, in order to renew your license, you will need to have obtained 3 CEUs in a Supervision topic

If you would like to opt out of being a Board Approved Supervisor, please send an email to mdh.socialwork@maryland.gov with the subject line "OPT OUT" along with your license number

PLEASE NOTIFY US IF YOU MOVE

If your address changes, please fill out the form which can be found on the right side of our home page.

<https://health.maryland.gov/bswe/Pages/default.aspx>

BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

The Board meets on the second Friday of the month. The public is invited to the Open Session which starts at 10:30am. Please see the link below for the schedule. Our meetings are hybrid - every other month is virtual. The link for the virtual Open Session is posted on the Wednesday before the meeting. More information here:

<https://health.maryland.gov/bswe/Pages/Board-Meetings.aspx>



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