

April 2, 2020

Board of Social Work Examiners
4201 Patterson Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21215

To the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners:

The Maryland Chapter of NASW joins with the University of Maryland School of Social Work and other schools around the state who are concerned about the students they will be graduating next month. We are also concerned about previous graduates who are also attempting to become licensed at this time.

As a result of the unprecedented social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global community, the United States, and residents of the Mid-Atlantic region, we request the Board to revise licensure requirements for new graduates of BSW and MSW degree programs in Maryland and others who are currently attempting to become licensed. Current students are managing dramatic changes in field practicum sites, courses moving from face-to-face to online instruction, sudden loss of employment, lack of childcare, and other supports that have been eliminated or dramatically altered. Any delay in licensure will limit new graduates' career options, salary expectations, and long-term livelihoods. More importantly, it reduces the amount of powerful and energized social workers eligible to contribute to the workforce in Maryland.

Therefore, we propose that the Board takes the following actions:

- Provide bachelors and masters level graduates of CSWE accredited institutions provisional licenses which would be good for up to one year.
- The provisional license would postpone requirements for testing and background checks until testing centers are safely reopened and have the capacity to meet the demand of exam applicants or alternate testing procedures have been implemented; and background checks can be safely administered.
- Advocate for employers to accept the provisional licenses in for new social workers in the same way they would any license.
- Allow social workers with a provisional license to earn supervision and/or clinical hours and to receive credit for CEUs that will contribute to licensure requirements at all levels

Thank you for your consideration of these issues and the proposed remedies. We implore you to take swift, strong, and creative action to address this pressing problem now, allowing a new cohort of highly-qualified social workers to serve their community in this greatest time of need.

Sincerely,

Daphne L. McClellan, PhD, MSW
Executive Director

Anthony Estreet, PhD, MSW
President