

POLICY BRIEF: Changes Needed to Chapter 90B Social Worker Certification and Licensure Act

The Social Work Certification and Licensure Act ([Chapter 90B](#)) is the North Carolina law that regulates social work certification and licensure in the state of North Carolina.

Changes are needed to Chapter 90B in order to remain in compliance with the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB), the entity that designs and implements the qualifying social work examinations for the North Carolina Social Work Certification and Licensure Board (Board). **Failure to make these changes to the Social Work Statute will prevent Licensed Clinical Social Work Associates (LCSWAs) from practicing beyond the initial two-year licensure period.**

In addition to a number of minor changes and updates, outlined below are the significant updates requested in draft legislation:

- **Clinical Licensure Exam must be taken AFTER two years of having the LCSWA.** Currently, LCSWAs in North Carolina can take the Clinical Social Work Licensure Exam as soon as they receive their LCSWA and must take and pass within two years of receiving their LCSWA. The clinical examination is designed by ASWB to be implemented AFTER two years of clinical practice under the Associate Licensure. Effective July 1, 2021, LCSWAs will not be able to sit for the Clinical exam until they have documented two years of supervised experience. Removal of the requirement to take the clinical exam before two years from the Statute would allow Associate licensees to renew their license if additional time is required to satisfy the two year practice requirement for exam eligibility and independent licensure; and allow the Licensure Board to be in compliance with ASWB's examination design and policies and continue to use the National exam when testing clinical competency prior to independent clinical licensure.
- **Temporary License to Military or Military Spouse.** This addition would allow the Licensure Board to issue a temporary license to military or military spouse applicant who is actively licensed in another jurisdiction and needs to expedite the licensing process in order to secure employment.
- **Change the minimum number of years a social worker licensed by the Board shall maintain records from three to ten years from the date the social worker terminates services to the client and the client services record is closed.** The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Insurance Trust strongly recommends retaining clinical records indefinitely. Statutes of limitations for professional liability are based on when the injured party first realizes or should have realized that the practitioner caused harmed.
- **Social Work Certification and Licensure Board appointments; terms; composition.** As the number of certified social workers in North Carolina continues to decline, it is recommended to change the composition of the board membership from two members who are certified as a Certified Social Worker (CSW), a Certified Master Social Worker (CMSW) or a Certified Social Work Manager (CSWM) to **one**. Amend three members of the Board who are Licensed Clinical Social Workers to **four**.

NASW North Carolina is in full support of the necessary changes suggested in HB203. If passed into law, the changes would take effect January 1, 2021.