

April 4, 2013

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Ms. Cynthia Montgomery
Regulatory Counsel
State Board of Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors
P.O. Box 2649
Harrisburg, Pa. 17105-2649

Dear Ms. Montgomery,

I am writing in STRONG PROTEST AGAINST the proposed nearly 50% increase in Pa. Social Work licensure fees from the current \$75 to \$115.

I believe this will pose an undue hardship on most licensed Pennsylvania social workers who are already working in underpaid positions and for many non-profit organizations. Please consider the following points:

- 1) \$115 represents an outrageous amount when compared to other licenses – for examples, a Pa. registered nurse pays \$65 for a license and an MD approximately \$300 – both of those medical professions are paid a great deal more than any hospital social worker
- 2) Most medical and non-profit institutions in Pennsylvania have put a hold on pay raises or have decreased pay % rates to a yearly minimum – for example, my large health care system has mostly limited annual raises to 2-3% for the past decade and put a cap on the maximum hourly rate. This \$115 fee will pose a financial hardship on many social workers, including myself who has been in the field for 33 years and have held a Pa. clinical license from the very first year it was approved.
- 3) Most institutions did not offer any financial assistance for licenses or CEU's even while requiring these as a condition of employment so the cost must be paid by the employee. I incur at least \$300-400 in CEU fees per licensure period which almost negates any pay raise I may get.
- 4) High cost of maintaining a license may dissuade organizations from requiring social workers to have a state license as a condition of employment, especially in the area of children and youth services who have traditionally been underfunded and low paid. This will decrease the quality of services rendered.

I am quite distressed that the only focus of the state board seems to be to increase the revenue via licensure fees while licensed clinical social workers in Pennsylvania do not have the level of professional scope of practice and professional job protection afforded to our colleagues in many other states.

Sincerely,



Linda Sharp, MSW, LSCW (or until I can no longer afford the license fee).

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