

3196



Association of Social Work Boards

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President
Timothy Martel Brown, MSW, LCSW, ACSW
Texas

Past President
M. Jenise Comer, LCSW, MSW, ACSW
Missouri

Secretary
Lisa Crockwell, MSW, RSW
Newfoundland and Labrador

Treasurer
Mel Harrington, CSW-PIP
South Dakota

Directors at Large
Joyce Bell, MSW, Ph.D., LCSW-C
Maryland

Harold Dean, MSW, LCSW, OSW-C
Arkansas

Florence S. Huffman, J.D.
Kentucky

Kenneth Middlebrooks
Minnesota

Patricia P. O'Reilly, Ph.D.
West Virginia

Robert F. Payne, MSSW, LCSW
Idaho

Beatrice Traub-Werner, MSW, RSW
Ontario

Chief Executive Officer
Mary Jo Monahan, MSW, LCSW

400 Southridge Parkway
Suite B
Culpeper, VA 22701

T / 800.225.6880
F / 540.829.0562
info@aswb.org

aswb.org

March 5, 2018

SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY

Regulatory Counsel
State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors
PO Box 69523
Harrisburg, PA 17106-5923
RA-STRegulatoryCounsel@pa.gov

RE: IRR #3196

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding Regulation #16A-6922 (IRRC #3196). This communication expresses ASWB's support for the changes proposed by the State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors (Board), but identifies one area of caution for the Board's consideration.

The Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) is the membership association of social work regulatory agencies in the United States and Canada. ASWB develops and administers all social work licensing examinations offered in the U.S. We support member boards in a variety of capacities, including the provision of research and other information for the development and administration of social work regulation.

ASWB publishes the Model Social Work Practice Act (Model Law). The Model Law was drafted as a resource to member boards and legislatures to promote public protection through regulation of social work practice. Originally adopted by the Association's Delegate Assembly in 1997, the Model Law is reviewed annually and changes are adopted by a vote of all member boards. The Model Law informs all legislative reviews conducted by ASWB.

The Board's proposed adoption of the Bachelors category of license is consistent with the framework established in the Model Law i.e. it is suggested that social work practice be regulated at the Clinical, Masters and Bachelors categories. Thirty-three U.S. jurisdictions regulate social practice using these three categories, including:

- | | | | |
|----------|-------------|----------------|----------------|
| Alabama | Kansas | Nevada | Oregon |
| Alaska | Kentucky | New Jersey | South Carolina |
| Arizona | Louisiana | New Mexico | Tennessee |
| Arkansas | Maine | North Carolina | Texas |
| Guam | Maryland | North Dakota | Utah |
| Hawaii | Minnesota | Northern | Washington |
| Idaho | Mississippi | Mariana | DC |
| Indiana | Missouri | Islands | West Virginia |
| Iowa | Nebraska | Oklahoma | Wisconsin |

2018 MAR 13 P 3:04
RECEIVED
IRRC

The Model Law also offers guidelines on continuing social work competence. It is suggested that social work licensees annually complete at least fifteen hours of approved programs of continuing education. This is consistent with the regulations proposed by the Board as part of IRRC #3196. ASWB research indicates that of the 154 regulated licenses in the U.S. with a two-year renewal period, the average number of hours required annually is 16. The average of all regulated licenses in the U.S. is 17 hours annually.

Amendments proposed in §47.33 for acceptable continuing education courses and programs, and §47.34 relating to registration of continuing education providers are consistent with the framework suggested by the Model Law. It is imperative that the content of continuing education courses and programs is consistent with the scope of practice of social workers participating in a program; it is incumbent upon providers of continuing education to demonstrate such in promotional and instructional materials. Additionally, the Model Law defines a continuing education contact hour as “a sixty (60) minute clock hour of instruction, not including breaks or meals” and this supports the Board’s recommendation to permit continue education courses of at least one clock hour.

One area of caution is found in the comment section related to §47.36 regarding preapproved provider status. It’s unclear how providers will demonstrate that their courses routinely meet the standards established by the board once the entity is approved to offer an unlimited number of courses. This is not a criticism in as much as it is an acknowledgement of the challenges associated with appropriately vetting continuing education providers and ensuring courses and programs adhere to required standards. Please consider this change carefully given its potential implications for Board work load and screening rigor.

It should be noted that the Board participants with the current resources and support from approving organizations who employ a rigorous review process. Social workers in Pennsylvania have access to an extensive list of preapproved providers and groups, and organizations who approve providers. ASWB is a preapproved provider as well as an approving organization with the Approved Continuing Education (ACE) program for Pennsylvania (§47.36). The ASWB ACE program was created to help licensing boards evaluate a continuing education provider’s ability to present social workers with effective, relevant continuing education. ACE approval demonstrates that a provider has been rigorously reviewed and found to offer quality continuing education according to best practices. More information is available on the ASWB website.

It is also worthwhile to note that Pennsylvania’s efforts to add bachelor’s licensure are in concert with the ASWB Mobility initiative. ASWB member boards voted to support the Mobility Resolution during the 2017 Delegate Assembly. The Mobility Strategy aspires to depoliticize the process, maintain regulatory expertise, and implement a commonsense approach to addressing social work practice mobility. Social work practice mobility refers to the physical and virtual mobility of social workers who elect to practice in multiple jurisdictions. Standards, as agreed upon by ASWB members and defined below, clarify social work licensure categories and criteria across jurisdictions.

The following Standards represent the core of the Mobility Strategy. It is anticipated that these Standards can be implemented administratively without the need for legislative, regulatory, and/or rule changes. However, members are being asked to provide jurisdictional-specific feedback.

- a. Three categories of license (from the ASWB Model Social Work Practice Act)
 - Licensed Baccalaureate Social Worker (LBSW)
 - Licensed Master’s Social Worker (LMSW)
 - Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)

- b. Four minimum essential criteria
 - Graduation from an accredited social work program
 - A passing score on the appropriate ASWB exam
 - Completion of supervised experience (as required by license)
 - No disciplinary action

ASWB for Regulation #16A-6922 (IRRC #3196) continued

Please be aware, that consistent with the mission to lessen burdens of member boards, ASWB provides resources that support member boards' Mobility efforts, including legally defensible, reliable, and valid exams, the Model Law, the Public Protection Database (PPD), application processing services, the Social Work Registry, the Approved Continuing Education (ACE) program, and continuing education audit services. ASWB is developing and populating a centralized, secure databank that can provide member boards with access to verified primary source documentation for social workers seeking equivalent licensure in additional jurisdictions.

Thank you again for the opportunity to review Regulation #16A-6922 (IRRC #3196). Please direct comments or questions to myself, csanner@aswb.org or 800-225-6880 ext. 3052 or Jennifer Henkel, ASWB Director of Member Services, jhenkel@aswb.org or 800-225-6880 ext. 3005.

Respectfully,

Cara Sanner
ASWB Member Services Specialist