

February 9th, 2023

HB 2340: Zoom Virtual Testimony - Proponent if Amended

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Chair Brenda Landwehr and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee – Thank you for the opportunity to address your Committee on behalf of the Kansas Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (KS-NASW). Social workers have been licensed at three levels of practice since 1974 - baccalaureate (LBSW), the master (LMSW), and at the independent clinical social worker (LCSW). The majority of licensed behavioral health professionals in Kansas and across the nation are social workers.

Extending the Social Work Workforce

Kansas is facing a well-documented and severe shortage of behavioral health professionals. This labor shortage is intensifying as more and more baby boomers retire and as the demand for mental health care increases across the nation

HB 2340 adds a new regulatory mandate for supervision of master level social workers to become clinicians.

Reducing Regulatory Obstacles and Barriers to Licensing:

We ask the committee to not adopt the new **“Board Approved Supervisor” mandate**. This requirement adds a new layer of cost, additional liability, and jumping through regulatory hoops for a social workers wanting to become clinically trained and licensed. Many of our seniors, youth and families are struggling with depression, anxiety, and suicide and now more than ever our policies must not place additional obstacles to grow the mental health workforce.

Our concern is this regulatory burden placed upon supervisors and employing agencies would delay the addition of more clinicians in Kansas for months. The process adds additional barriers when Kansas is facing severe shortage of clinically trained social workers.

HB 2340 requires a LCSW (clinical social worker) to 1) obtain a BSRB “Board Approved Supervisor” status; and 2) a master’s level social worker seeking to obtain a clinical license **would be limited to only** BSRB “Board-Approved Supervisors.” Thus LMSW social workers would no longer be able to receive supervision from their current LCSW supervisor unless they achieved the BSRB regulatory requirements.

This provision requires supervisors:

- Submit an application and pay an additional fee to get the “Board Approved Supervisor” title,
- Pay for (at least 3 hours training) could be expanded as it will be further defined by regulation, and
- Thus acquiring at least three hours of continuing education related to the enhancement of supervision skills, including at least one hour related to ethics in supervision.

Behavioral Health Provider Shortage Creates Barriers to Mental Health Service Provision

KS Chapter supports modernizing and streamlining licensing regulations. As demonstrated in this chart it is very difficult for a LMSW in Kansas to advance their career to the clinical level compared to neighboring states due to our current regulatory environment.

Kansas Has a Much Lower Percentage of Clinical Social Workers Than Neighboring States

State	Licensed Clinical Social Worker	Licensed Master Social Worker	% of Clinical Social Workers of (MSWs)
Colorado	8229	1843	81%
Missouri	6689	1990	77%
Oklahoma	2932	920	76%
Kansas	2752	4021	41%

**Kansas 2022 numbers includes licensed social workers with addresses outside of Kansas*

**Also includes licensed social workers no longer practicing or practicing less than 10 hours a week*

***Social Work Workforce Profile**

(Living in Kansas and Practicing over 10 Hours a Week)

Licensed Specialist Clinical Social Workers (LSCSW)*

69 Western Kansas

1,141 Statewide

Age Distribution - LSCSWs

51 is the average age

39.4% over the age of 55

20.9% age 65 and over

Rural vs Urban in Kansas - LSCSWs

1,004 – 88% are in urban areas

137 – 12% are in rural counties

Today, Kansas is facing a severe shortage of trained mental health responders.

We believe by amending the new proposed **“Board Approved Supervisor Mandate”** from **HB 2340** will reduce barriers to becoming a clinically trained social worker.

We believe that a system with less bureaucratic layers increases access to critical mental health services for Kansans. By removing the “Board Approved Supervisor” mandate from HB 2340 will ensure that social work students practice in Kansas while increasing the State’s ability to address the behavioral health treatment needs of children and families.

**Note: Social Workforce Profile information is taken by from the December, 2022 report from Kansas Health Institute “Defining the Behavioral Health Workforce in Kansas” and “Addressing the Behavioral Health Workforce Needs in Kansas.”*

Licensed Bachelor, Master, and Specialist Clinical Social Workers
 2021 Social Workers Living in Kansas (includes licensed social workers who are retired)
 By Tim Davis, Ph.D., LCSW, Professor and Chair
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*based on 2021 BSRB data

