

Oral Testimony to the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

Neutral Position on SB 238: Reducing certain requirements for licensure by the behavioral sciences regulatory board, requiring board approval to provide clinical social work supervision and expanding out-of-state temporary permits to practice.

Kelly Jones, LMSW

Associate Professor of Practice | Director of Field Education

KU School of Social Welfare

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Dear Chair Hilderbrand and the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee:

I have worked in the health and human services arena for over twenty-five years and I am licensed to practice social work by the Kansas Behavioral Health Regulatory Board (BSRB). Currently, I am the KU School of Social Welfare Director of Field Education and an Associate Professor of Social Welfare Practice. I have coordinated, overseen, and evaluated approximately 1,700 social work practicum placements.

My purpose today is to educate on SB 238 Sec. 6. K.S.A. 65-6306 (C), which states in part "...the [advanced year clinical] practicum shall integrate diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders with use of the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders as identified in K.A.R. 102-2-14 and shall include not less than ~~350~~ 200 hours of direct client contact." (SB 238 draft 2/23/21: pg.10 line 10)

- The 200-hour direct client contact requirement within state statute is unique to Kansas. No other state or territory requires a specific number of direct client contact hours within a social work practicum for a clinical social work license.
- The 200-hour direct client contact requirement is not supported by social work field education literature and is not required by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), which accredits all United States social work programs of higher education.

Field Education is considered the signature pedagogy of social work education. Within that pedagogy, CSWE does prioritize a set amount of practicum hours¹, but those hours are not broken down by direct client contact time as described in the Kansas statutes. To some extent, the diversity of social work practice does not lend itself well to the metric. (One practicum student may be using brief interventions with Veterans seeking housing. Another may be practicing telehealth talk-therapy sessions in medically underserved areas of Kansas. Many students are practicing in our k-12 schools; and others provide emotional support to a caregiver for a person with dementia in a long term care setting.) MSW students who graduate from a Kansas CSWE accredited social work program will meet the CSWE mandated total practicum hours and will be ready to practice at the LMSW licensure level. However, depending on their practicum setting, they might not meet the Kansas 200-hour direct client-contact [within their practicum setting] requirement for LSCSW licensure. Those students routinely report to me that if they do not meet the Kansas direct client contact practicum requirement for LSCSW licensure, they intend to leave Kansas and seek a clinical license in Missouri, Colorado, and elsewhere.

If the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee amended SB238 to exclude the 200-hour direct client contact requirement, that is consistent with all other states.

Thank you for reviewing SB238,

Kelly Jones, LMSW

1. CSWE requires 900 total practicum hours, spread out over a two-year practicum experience. One practicum year is generalist practice and the subsequent year is advanced practice.