



Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

March 25, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle  
Chair, Senate Finance Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East  
11 Bladen St. Annapolis, Maryland 21401 - 1991

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk  
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee  
Room 241, House Office Building  
6 Bladen St. Annapolis, Maryland 21401 - 1991

**RE: Report Required by SB 871, Ch 228 (2023) - Preliminary Report on the Workgroup on Social Worker Requirements for Licensure - (MSAR# 14874)**

Dear Chairs Guzzone and Peña-Melnyk:

Pursuant to the requirements of the Chapter 228 of the Acts of 2023, SB 871, The Maryland Department of Health respectfully submits this preliminary report on the findings and recommendations of The Workgroup on Social Work Requirements for Licensure (“The Workgroup”).

If you have any questions or comments concerning the report, please contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director, Office of Governmental Affairs, at [sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov](mailto:sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.  
Secretary

cc: Karen Richards, LCSW, Executive Director, Board of Social Work Examiners  
Marie Grant, J.D., Assistant Secretary of Health Policy  
Sarah Case-Herron, J.D., Director, Office of Governmental Affairs  
Sarah Albert, Department of Legislative Services (5 copies) (MSAR# 14874)

## **Workgroup on Social Worker Requirements for Licensure: Activities to Date**

SB 871 of 2023 established a Workgroup on Social Worker Requirements for Licensure, staffed by MDH, and extended the board by one year to July 1, 2025, at which time the work group is scheduled to terminate. The Workgroup has conducted several briefings on the background of Maryland Social Work Licensure. All meetings began with administrative updates and had the opportunity for public comment at the end of the meeting.

### **October 25, 2023: Convening Meeting**

During the first meeting on October 24th, an overview of SB 871 was provided. A conversation was facilitated regarding what the Workgroup would like to accomplish. A schedule was created for future meetings, as well as points of conversation for the next meeting.

### **November 14, 2023: Social Work Licensure Requirements and ASWB Exam Pass Rate Analysis**

The second meeting on November 14th discussed the Maryland Association of Social Work Boards' (ASWB) exam passage rates. There was also discussion on the National Association of Deans and Directors of Schools of Social Work (NADD) plans and position on the exam requirement. The meeting transitioned to comparing Social Work requirements in the other states included in HHS Region Three. The discussion moved to states that have removed the exam requirements. The meeting finalized with discussions on temporary and provisional licensure requirements.

### **December 5, 2023: Transition to Alternative Licensure Pathways and Interaction with the Board of Social Work**

The December 5th meeting briefed the members of the Workgroup on the grandfathering clause and transitions to alternative licensure pathways. The licensure and application processes were discussed. A discussion on continuing education requirements and the Licensed Master of Social Work (LMSW) independent practice certification concluded the meeting.

### **December 19, 2023 Social Work Exam, License and Renewal Fees and Supervision Requirements**

The December 19th meeting discussed the exam fees, initial license fees and renewal fees for social workers and comparable professions that included licensed counselors, nurses, and psychologists. The cost of supervision was also a topic of discussion during this meeting.

### **January 9, 2024 Testing Barriers for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and Subgroup Expectations**

Dr. Judith Mounty presented on Testing Barriers for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing during the January 9th meeting. Following the presentation, The Workgroup discussed the subgroups that will be necessary for the creation of recommendations as required by SB 871. Per the discussion

that occurred during this meeting, the subgroups are to meet monthly at least once before the last Tuesday of the month. The subgroups are to provide summaries of their work to the Workgroup prior to the convening of the full Workgroup.

### **January 30, 2024 Presentations from the Association of Social Work Boards and The National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN)**

In the January 30th meeting, The Workgroup heard presentations from the providers of the Social Work and Nursing licensure examinations on the content of the exams, the differences in the English, English as a second language, and American Sign Language versions of the exams, and disability accommodations. The Workgroup also assigned its members to subgroups, and reiterated the required meeting cadence for the subgroups.

### **Next Steps: Subgroups and Reports**

After concluding its series of briefings, the workgroup has turned to producing recommendations to the legislature as required by SB 871. The Workgroup has created four subgroups with a particular focus for recommendations. These subgroups are detailed below:

- o Policy: Board of Social Work, Disability and Accommodations Certification and Requirements **(List of Items not Exhaustive)**
- o Universities/Schools/Programs of Social Work - Curriculum, CSWE Requirements **(List of Items not Exhaustive)**
- o Testing Barriers - Cost of Preparation, Exam Fees, Testing Locations, Disability and Accommodations **(List of Items not Exhaustive)**
- o Recommendations on Testing - the mandate for this group is twofold:
  - First: Recommendations on continuing the use of the ASWB exam for the LBSW and LMSW, whether to establish a temporary license for those who meet the LBSW. LMSW requirements but have not passed the ASWB exam, how supervision could be provided to LBSWs/LMSWs at no cost to the licensees.
  - Second: Complete Licensure Examinations as stipulated by SB 871 Section 2, Subsection h

### **Workgroup Timeline**

Below is the timeline that the workgroup will be following in order to meet the reporting requirements stipulated in SB 871.

- January - June: The subgroups will continue to meet once or twice a month, and the main workgroup will meet at the end of every month.
- January 31st: The Workgroup will submit its preliminary report to the legislature.
- March 31st: The Workgroup will submit its interim report to the legislature.
- The workgroup is working to complete and submit its final report by the December 1, 2024 deadline