

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

House Bill 1404 (Delegate McComas)  
Economic Matters

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**Workers' Compensation - Rehabilitation Practitioners - Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical**

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This bill authorizes an individual licensed as a certified social worker-clinical to register with the Workers' Compensation Commission (WCC) as a rehabilitation practitioner for purposes of providing rehabilitation services under workers' compensation law. The bill makes a conforming change related to the circumstances under which an individual may have a registration suspended or revoked and specifies that certain supervision requirements do not apply to a licensed certified social worker-clinical.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Special fund revenues for WCC increase, likely minimally, beginning in FY 2026 as WCC begins to register additional rehabilitation practitioners under the bill's requirements. WCC can review the additional applications and administer the additional registrations using existing budgeted resources.

**Local Effect:** The bill is not anticipated to materially affect local government operations or finances.

**Small Business Effect:** Potential meaningful.

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**Analysis**

**Bill Summary:** A violation of the rules and regulations adopted and enforced by the State Board of Social Work Examiners (which licenses certified social workers-clinical) in accordance with the laws governing rehabilitation practitioners is grounds for denial of a

rehabilitation practitioner registration to any applicant, or suspension or revocation of registrant's registration.

Existing supervision requirements that apply to certain rehabilitation counselors and vocational evaluators (which are specific types of rehabilitation practitioners) do not apply to a licensed certified social worker-clinical working as a rehabilitation practitioner.

**Current Law:** If an employee covered under workers' compensation insurance has suffered an accidental personal injury, compensable hernia, or occupational disease, the employee is entitled to compensation benefits paid by the employer, its insurer, the Subsequent Injury Fund, or the Uninsured Employers' Fund, as appropriate. Workers' compensation benefits include wage replacement, medical treatment, death and funeral costs, and vocational rehabilitation expenses.

Vocational rehabilitation is a workers' compensation benefit that provides disabled covered employees who cannot return to their former job (due to a work-related injury) assistance in re-entering the workforce. A specialist in vocational rehabilitation provides services that may include testing, job placement, vocational counseling, on-the-job training, and retraining to the injured worker to enable them to return to work. Generally, in order to provide vocational rehabilitation services in conjunction with a workers' compensation case or claim, an individual must register with WCC. WCC must establish the application process and fee by regulation. The registration fee is currently \$150 (whether for initial issuance or renewal), and the registration is valid for three years from the date of issuance.

To qualify for registration as a rehabilitation practitioner, an individual must meet specified education, experience, and/or certification requirements. For example, to register as a nurse care manager, the individual must simply be certified as a nurse care manager by the State Board of Nursing. However, to register as a rehabilitation counselor, the individual may need a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree with relevant experience and/or be certified as a rehabilitation counselor, certified vocational evaluator, or certified disability management specialist, or hold an equivalent national certification. Additionally, under some circumstances, a rehabilitation counselor or vocational evaluator must work under the administrative supervision of another individual registered by WCC, as specified.

A violation of the rules and regulations adopted or enforced by WCC or the State Board of Nursing in accordance with the laws governing rehabilitation practitioners is grounds for denial of a registration to any applicant, or suspension or revocation of registrant's registration.

**State Revenues:** As noted above, WCC charges a \$150 registration fee for individuals who register to provide vocational rehabilitation services through the State's workers'

compensation system. Thus, special fund revenues for WCC increase, likely minimally, beginning in fiscal 2026. A precise estimate of the total increase in revenues depends on how many licensed certified social workers-clinical register with WCC and when each registration takes place, which cannot be reliably estimated without actual experience under the bill.

**Small Business Effect:** Small businesses that employ individuals licensed as social workers may experience increased business through the State's workers' compensation system.

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### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 1285 and SB 931 of 2024, HB 694 of 2023, and HB 1164 of 2022.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Chesapeake Employers' Insurance Company; Subsequent Injury Fund; Uninsured Employers' Fund; Workers' Compensation Commission; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 10, 2025  
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