

SENATE BILL 874

J2

6lr2371
CF HB 1119

By: **Senator M. Washington**

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2026

Assigned to: Finance

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Health Occupations – Social Workers – Scopes of Practice**

3 FOR the purpose of altering the scopes of practice for licensed social workers; and generally
4 relating to the practice of social work in the State.

5 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
6 Article – Health Occupations
7 Section 19–101 and 19–102
8 Annotated Code of Maryland
9 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

10 BY repealing
11 Article – Health Occupations
12 Section 19–307
13 Annotated Code of Maryland
14 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

15 BY adding to
16 Article – Health Occupations
17 Section 19–307
18 Annotated Code of Maryland
19 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

20 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
21 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

22 **Article – Health Occupations**

23 19–101.

24 (a) In this title the following words have the meanings indicated.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(b) “Board” means the State Board of Social Work Examiners.

(c) “Certified” means having demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Board that the individual has completed 2 years of supervised social work practice as defined in § 19–302(d) or (e) of this title.

(c–1) “Conditional license” means a license issued by the Board under, and as limited by, § 19–309.1 of this title to practice:

(1) Bachelor social work; or

(2) Master social work.

(d) “Independent practice” means to practice [bachelor social work or master] social work without the requirement of supervision by another social worker.

(e) “License” means, unless the context requires otherwise:

(1) One of four categories of licenses issued by the Board authorizing an individual to practice:

(i) Bachelor social work;

(ii) Master social work;

(iii) Certified social work; or

(iv) Certified social work—clinical; or

(2) A conditional license issued by the Board.

(f) “Licensed bachelor social worker” means an individual licensed by the Board to practice bachelor social work.

(g) “Licensed certified social worker” means an individual licensed by the Board, on or before December 31, 2023, to practice certified social work.

(h) “Licensed certified social worker—clinical” means an individual licensed by the Board to practice clinical social work.

(i) “Licensed master social worker” means an individual licensed by the Board to practice master social work.

(j) “Practice bachelor social work” means to [use the education and training required under § 19–302(b) of this title to:

(1) Practice social work under the supervision of a licensed certified social worker, licensed certified social worker—clinical, licensed master social worker, or licensed bachelor social worker who meets the conditions specified in regulations; or

(2) If approved by the Board in accordance with § 19–302(f) of this title, engage in independent practice] **PRACTICE SOCIAL WORK AS A LICENSED BACHELOR SOCIAL WORKER IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 19–307 OF THIS TITLE.**

(k) “Practice certified social work” means to [use the education, training, and experience required under § 19–302(d) of this title to practice social work] **PRACTICE SOCIAL WORK AS A LICENSED CERTIFIED SOCIAL WORKER IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 19–307 OF THIS TITLE.**

(l) “Practice clinical social work” means to [use the specialized education, training, and experience required under § 19–302(e) of this title to practice social work] **INDEPENDENTLY PRACTICE CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 19–307 OF THIS TITLE.**

(m) “Practice master social work” means to [use the education and training required under § 19–302(c) of this title to:

(1) Practice social work under the supervision of a licensed certified social worker, licensed certified social worker—clinical, or licensed master social worker who meets the conditions specified in regulations; or

(2) If approved by the Board in accordance with § 19–302(f) of this title, engage in independent practice] **PRACTICE SOCIAL WORK AS A LICENSED MASTER SOCIAL WORKER IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 19–307 OF THIS TITLE.**

(n) (1) “Practice social work” means to apply [the theories, knowledge, procedures, methods, and ethics derived from receiving a baccalaureate or master’s degree from a program in social work that is accredited by or a candidate for accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education, or an equivalent organization approved by the Council on Social Work Education, to restore or enhance social functioning of individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations, or communities through:

(i) Assessment;

(ii) Planning;

(iii) Intervention;

(iv) Evaluation of intervention plans;

(v) Case management;

(vi) Information and referral;

(vii) Counseling that does not include diagnosis or treatment of behavioral health disorders;

(viii) Advocacy;

(ix) Consultation;

(x) Education;

(xi) Research;

(xii) Community organization;

(xiii) Development, implementation, and administration of policies, programs, and activities; or

(xiv) Supervision of other social workers as set forth in regulations] **SOCIAL WORK KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, VALUES, AND ETHICS TO ENHANCE OR RESTORE THE BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL FUNCTIONING, WELL-BEING, AND CONDITIONS OF INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITIES.**

(2) "Practice social work" includes, **AS APPROPRIATE TO THE EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND LICENSE CATEGORY OF THE LICENSEE:**

(i) [Counseling for alcohol and drug use and addictive behavior; and] **PSYCHOSOCIAL ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION;**

(ii) [Using technology as set forth in regulations] **CASE MANAGEMENT, CARE COORDINATION, AND SERVICE PLANNING;**

(III) COUNSELING, SUPPORT, AND PROBLEM-SOLVING INTERVENTIONS;

(IV) CRISIS INTERVENTION AND SAFETY PLANNING;

(V) CONSULTATION AND INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION;

(VI) INFORMATION AND REFERRAL;

(VII) ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES;

1 **(VIII) PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, ADMINISTRATION, POLICY**
2 **ANALYSIS, AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION;**

3 **(IX) SUPERVISION AND TRAINING OF OTHER SOCIAL WORKERS**
4 **IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS TITLE;**

5 **(X) RESEARCH, EVALUATION, AND THE APPLICATION OF**
6 **EVIDENCE-INFORMED PRACTICE;**

7 **(XI) THE USE OF TELEHEALTH, ELECTRONIC PRACTICE, AND**
8 **OTHER TECHNOLOGIES CONSISTENT WITH PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND**
9 **REGULATIONS ADOPTED BY THE BOARD; AND**

10 **(XII) CLINICAL ASSESSMENT, DIAGNOSIS, TREATMENT, AND**
11 **PSYCHOTHERAPY PERFORMED BY A LICENSED CERTIFIED SOCIAL**
12 **WORKER—CLINICAL.**

13 **[(3) For an individual licensed as a master social worker, “practice social**
14 **work” also includes:**

15 (i) Supervision of other social workers if the master social worker
16 meets the requirements set out in regulations;

17 (ii) Formulating a diagnosis, under the supervision of a licensed
18 certified social worker—clinical;

19 (iii) Treatment of biopsychosocial conditions, under the supervision
20 of a licensed certified social worker—clinical; and

21 (iv) Treatment of behavioral health disorders, including substance
22 use disorders, addictive disorders, and mental disorders, and the provision of
23 psychotherapy under the supervision of a licensed certified social worker—clinical.

24 **(4) For an individual licensed as a certified social worker, “practice social**
25 **work” also includes:**

26 (i) Supervision of other social workers;

27 (ii) Formulating a diagnosis, under the supervision of a licensed
28 certified social worker—clinical;

29 (iii) Treatment of biopsychosocial conditions, under the supervision
30 of a licensed certified social worker—clinical; and

(iv) Treatment of behavioral health disorders, including substance use disorders, addictive disorders, and mental disorders, and the provision of psychotherapy under the supervision of a licensed certified social worker—clinical.

(5) For an individual licensed as a certified social worker—clinical, “practice social work” also includes:

(i) Supervision of other social workers;

(ii) Evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment of biopsychosocial conditions, mental and emotional conditions and impairments, and behavioral health disorders, including substance use disorders, addictive disorders, and mental disorders, as defined in § 7.5–101 of the Health – General Article;

(iii) Petitioning for emergency evaluation under Title 10, Subtitle 6 of the Health – General Article; and

(iv) The provision of psychotherapy.]

(o) “Private practice” means the provision of psychotherapy by a licensed certified social worker—clinical who assumes responsibility and accountability for the nature and quality of the services provided to a client:

(1) In exchange for direct payment or third-party reimbursement;

or

(2) On a pro bono basis as determined in regulations adopted by the Board.

(p) “Psychotherapy” means the assessment and treatment of mental disorders and behavioral health disorders.

(q) “Reactivation” means the process of obtaining a license less than 5 years after the Board placed an individual on inactive status.

(r) “Reinstatement” means the process of obtaining a license less than 5 years after the Board placed an individual on nonrenewed status.

(s) “Reissuance” means the process of obtaining a license more than 5 years after the Board placed an individual on inactive or nonrenewed status.

(t) “Supervision” means a formalized professional relationship between a supervisor and a supervisee that:

(1) Provides evaluation and direction of the supervisee; and

(2) Promotes continued development of the supervisee's knowledge, skills, and abilities to provide social work services in an ethical and competent manner.

19–102.

(a) The General Assembly finds that the profession of social work profoundly affects the lives, health, safety, and welfare of the people of this State.

(b) The purpose of this title is to [protect the public] **ENSURE THAT INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES IN THE STATE RECEIVE COMPETENT, ETHICAL, AND EFFECTIVE SOCIAL WORK SERVICES** by:

(1) [Setting minimum qualification, education, training, and experience standards for the licensing of individuals to practice social work; and] **ESTABLISHING CLEAR STANDARDS OF EDUCATION, SUPERVISED EXPERIENCE, AND PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION FOR EACH CATEGORY OF SOCIAL WORK LICENSURE;**

(2) Promoting and maintaining high professional standards for the practice of social work **ACROSS CLINICAL, COMMUNITY, ORGANIZATIONAL, ADMINISTRATIVE, AND POLICY-ORIENTED AREAS; AND**

(3) ENSURING ETHICAL, ACCOUNTABLE, AND QUALIFIED PRACTICE BY REQUIRING SOCIAL WORKERS TO BE PREPARED, LICENSED, AND ENGAGED IN ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

[19–307.

(a) Subject to the provisions of subsections (b) and (c) of this section, a license authorizes the licensee to practice social work while the license is in effect.

(b) A licensed social worker may practice social work only within the scope of the specific category of license issued by the Board.

(c) (1) A licensed bachelor social worker may not:

(i) Engage in independent practice unless the licensed bachelor social worker is approved by the Board to engage in independent practice in accordance with § 19–302(f) of this subtitle;

(ii) Make a clinical diagnosis of a behavioral health or emotional disorder;

(iii) Provide psychotherapy; or

(iv) Engage in private practice.

(2) A licensed master social worker may not:

(i) Engage in independent practice unless the licensed master social worker is approved by the Board to engage in independent practice in accordance with § 19–302(f) of this subtitle;

(ii) Treat behavioral health or emotional disorders or provide psychotherapy without the supervision of a licensed certified social worker—clinical;

(iii) Diagnose a behavioral health disorder without the supervision of a licensed certified social worker—clinical; or

(iv) Engage in private practice.

(3) A licensed certified social worker may not:

(i) Treat behavioral health or emotional disorders or provide psychotherapy without the supervision of a licensed certified social worker—clinical;

(ii) Diagnose a mental disorder without the supervision of a licensed certified social worker—clinical; or

(iii) Engage in private practice.]

19–307.

(A) (1) A LICENSE ISSUED BY THE BOARD AUTHORIZES THE LICENSEE TO PRACTICE SOCIAL WORK WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE SPECIFIC LICENSE CATEGORY AND CONSISTENT WITH THE EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND SUPERVISED EXPERIENCE OF THE LICENSEE.

(2) EXCEPT AS OTHERWISE PROVIDED IN THIS SUBTITLE, A LICENSEE MAY PRACTICE SOCIAL WORK.

(B) (1) A LICENSED BACHELOR SOCIAL WORKER MAY:

(I) PERFORM GENERALIST SOCIAL WORK FUNCTIONS, INCLUDING PSYCHOSOCIAL ASSESSMENT, CASE MANAGEMENT, SERVICE PLANNING, RESOURCE REFERRAL, CLIENT ADVOCACY, AND SUPPORTIVE COUNSELING;

(II) CONDUCT SOCIAL HISTORIES, HOME STUDIES, AND BASIC PSYCHOSOCIAL EVALUATIONS; AND

(III) ENGAGE IN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION, OUTREACH, AND PROGRAM SUPPORT.

(2) A LICENSED BACHELOR SOCIAL WORKER MAY NOT:

(I) DIAGNOSE A MENTAL, EMOTIONAL, OR BEHAVIORAL DISORDER;

(II) PROVIDE PSYCHOTHERAPY;

(III) PROVIDE CLINICAL TREATMENT; OR

(IV) ENGAGE IN INDEPENDENT PRACTICE, EXCEPT AS APPROVED BY THE BOARD.

(C) (1) A LICENSED MASTER SOCIAL WORKER MAY:

(I) PERFORM THE FUNCTIONS OF A LICENSED BACHELOR SOCIAL WORKER;

(II) CONDUCT PSYCHOSOCIAL ASSESSMENTS, DEVELOP TREATMENT PLANS, AND PROVIDE COUNSELING, PSYCHOTHERAPY, OR OTHER CLINICAL SERVICES UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF A LICENSED CERTIFIED SOCIAL WORKER–CLINICAL;

(III) ENGAGE IN CASE MANAGEMENT, CARE COORDINATION, CRISIS INTERVENTION, AND INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION; AND

(IV) PROVIDE ADMINISTRATIVE, POLICY, RESEARCH, OR COMMUNITY PRACTICE SERVICES CONSISTENT WITH GRADUATE–LEVEL TRAINING.

(2) A LICENSED MASTER SOCIAL WORKER MAY NOT:

(I) PRACTICE CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK INDEPENDENTLY;

(II) DIAGNOSE A MENTAL, EMOTIONAL, BEHAVIORAL, OR ADDICTIVE DISORDER WITHOUT SUPERVISION; OR

(III) ENGAGE IN INDEPENDENT PRACTICE OF SOCIAL WORK, EXCEPT AS APPROVED BY THE BOARD.

(D) A LICENSED CERTIFIED SOCIAL WORKER–CLINICAL MAY:

(1) INDEPENDENTLY PRACTICE CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK;

1 **(2) DIAGNOSE AND TREAT MENTAL, EMOTIONAL, BEHAVIORAL, OR**
2 **ADDICTIVE DISORDERS;**

3 **(3) PROVIDE PSYCHOTHERAPY AND OTHER THERAPEUTIC**
4 **INTERVENTIONS;**

5 **(4) CONDUCT ADVANCED PSYCHOSOCIAL ASSESSMENTS, TREATMENT**
6 **PLANNING, AND EVALUATION; AND**

7 **(5) PROVIDE CLINICAL SUPERVISION IN ACCORDANCE WITH BOARD**
8 **REGULATIONS.**

9 **(E) A LICENSED BACHELOR SOCIAL WORKER, A LICENSED MASTER SOCIAL**
10 **WORKER, OR A LICENSED CERTIFIED SOCIAL WORKER MAY ENGAGE IN**
11 **INDEPENDENT PRACTICE ONLY AS AUTHORIZED BY THE BOARD.**

12 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
13 October 1, 2026.