

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 individual has completed 2 years of supervised social work practice as defined in § 2(d) or (e) of this title.

(c-1) "Conditional license" means a license issued by the Board under, and as provided 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] 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
o 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, before December 31, 2023, to practice certified social work.

(h) "Licensed certified social worker-clinical" means an individual licensed by the 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 provided 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

(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.**

11 (l) “Practice clinical social work” means to [use the specialized education,
12 training, and experience required under § 19-302(e) of this title to practice social work]
13 **INDEPENDENTLY PRACTICE CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK IN ACCORDANCE WITH §**
14 **19-307 OF THIS TITLE.**

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

(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.**

29 (i) Assessment:

30 (ii) Planning;

31 (iii) Intervention;

32 (iv) Evaluation of intervention plans;

33 (v) Case management;

- 1 (vi) Information and referral;
- 2 (vii) Counseling that does not include diagnosis or treatment of
- 3 behavioral health disorders;
- 4 (viii) Advocacy;
- 5 (ix) Consultation;
- 6 (x) Education;
- 7 (xi) Research;
- 8 (xii) Community organization;
- 9 (xiii) Development, implementation, and administration of policies,
- 10 programs, and activities; or

11 (xiv) Supervision of other social workers as set forth in regulations]

12 **SOCIAL WORK KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, VALUES, AND ETHICS TO ENHANCE OR RESTORE**
13 **THE BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL FUNCTIONING, WELL-BEING, AND CONDITIONS OF**
14 **INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITIES.**

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

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

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

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

23 (IV) **CRISIS INTERVENTION AND SAFETY PLANNING;**

24 (V) **CONSULTATION AND INTERDISCIPLINARY**
25 **COLLABORATION;**

26 (VI) **INFORMATION AND REFERRAL;**

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

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

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

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

(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.

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.

4 (5) For an individual licensed as a certified social worker-clinical, "practice
5 social work" also includes:

6 (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;

13 (iv) The provision of psychotherapy.]

14 (o) "Private practice" means the provision of psychotherapy by a licensed certified
15 social worker-clinical who assumes responsibility and accountability for the nature and
16 quality of the services provided to a client:

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

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

21 (p) "Psychotherapy" means the assessment and treatment of mental disorders
22 and behavioral health disorders.

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

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

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

29 (t) "Supervision" means a formalized professional relationship between a
30 supervisor and a supervisee that:

31 (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.

3 19-102.

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

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

19 [19-307.]

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

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

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

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

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

30 (iii) Provide psychotherapy; or

31 (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;

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

9 (iv) Engage in private practice.

(3) A licensed certified social worker may not:

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

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

15 (iii) Engage in private practice.]

16 19-307.

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

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

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

(2) A LICENSED BACHELOR SOCIAL WORKER MAY NOT:

(I) DIAGNOSE A MENTAL, EMOTIONAL, OR BEHAVIORAL

(II) PROVIDE PSYCHOTHERAPY;

(III) PROVIDE CLINICAL TREATMENT; OR

**(IV) ENGAGE IN INDEPENDENT PRACTICE, EXCEPT AS
E BOARD.**

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

(I) PERFORM THE FUNCTIONS OF A LICENSED BACHELOR

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

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

(IV) PROVIDE ADMINISTRATIVE, POLICY, RESEARCH, OR 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
ORDER WITHOUT SUPERVISION; OR**

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

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

(1) INDEPENDENTLY PRACTICE CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK;

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

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