

Testimony Concerning HB 527  
Health Occupations - Social Workers - Scope of Practice, Supervision, and Application  
Decision Appeal Process  
Submitted to the Health and Government Operations Committee  
Thursday, February 6, 2020

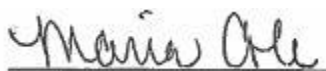
Position: Support

I, Maria Cole, LMSW, MPH, am a licensed master social worker residing in Howard County, Maryland. I strongly support HB 527 which clarifies that LMSWs can work in substance use programs. I have received training in this area and work with patients who suffer from substance use disorders in my role as a hospital social worker. One of my primary functions is discharge planning for those leaving the inpatient hospital which can include transfers to inpatient substance abuse treatment facilities. In this role, I have established relationships with the personnel who receive these patients and have become familiar with the work they do to help people heal and reintegrate into the community. It is important for me to continue to have the opportunity to do this work and to become more engaged in substance use programs as the need continues to grow in our state.

Additionally, this bill will help to remedy the shortage of board approved supervisors for social workers. For myself and many of my colleagues, finding a supervisor within a reasonable driving distance has been a difficult task. Due to the new regulations that require all social workers to be supervised, there will be an increased strain on social workers to locate supervisors and coordinate meetings. Permitting social workers with at least 5 years' experience and who have completed board approved continuing education in supervision to become supervisors of other social workers will facilitate compliance and advancement for those who seek higher licenses.

Social workers add value to society at the individual, community, and organizational levels. We counsel, we advocate, and we help to dismantle barriers for the most marginalized among us. Voting in favor of HB 527 is imperative so that we continue to do the necessary work.

Submitted by:



Maria Cole, LMSW, MPH

Office: 469-844-0450

Email: [mariacolesw@gmail.com](mailto:mariacolesw@gmail.com)