

Economic Matters Committee

March 11, 2025

House Bill 1404

**Workers' Compensation - Evaluation of Permanent Impairments - Licensed Certified
Social Worker-Clinical**

***** POSITION: FAVORABLE *****

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, Maryland Chapter (NASW-MD), I am pleased to submit this testimony in support of House Bill 1404. NASW-MD represents over 2,700 licensed social workers across the state, and we believe that this legislation will enhance the ability of social workers to contribute meaningfully to the rehabilitation process for injured workers, while also aligning with the evolving needs of our profession.

House Bill 1404 seeks to authorize Licensed Certified Social Workers-Clinical (LCSW-C) to register as rehabilitation practitioners under the workers' compensation system. This is a critical step forward in recognizing the unique skills that clinical social workers bring to the rehabilitation process and ensuring that injured workers receive holistic, comprehensive care during their recovery.

Social workers play a crucial role in supporting individuals facing mental health challenges, trauma, and life-altering injuries. LCSW-C possess advanced clinical training that equips them to assess, diagnose, and provide therapeutic services to individuals struggling with the emotional and psychological impacts of injury and illness. By allowing LCSW-C to serve as rehabilitation practitioners, this bill will help ensure that injured workers receive the full spectrum of care that they need, including emotional and mental health support, in addition to physical rehabilitation.

Furthermore, this bill aligns with the growing recognition of the importance of mental health in the recovery process. Injured workers often face significant emotional stress, anxiety, depression, and trauma related to their injuries. LCSW-C are trained to assess and intervene with these conditions, helping to prevent long-term mental health issues and promote a faster, more effective recovery. This not only benefits the individual worker but also has the potential to reduce overall healthcare costs associated with prolonged recovery times and the development of secondary conditions.

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The provisions of this bill also ensure that LCSW-C are not subject to certain supervision requirements that may be inappropriate or burdensome for individuals who are already licensed clinical professionals. As licensed clinicians with advanced education and training, LCSW-C have the expertise to function independently in the rehabilitation process and provide high-quality care without unnecessary administrative barriers.

NASW-MD strongly supports this bill because it will allow LCSW-C to make a more meaningful impact in the lives of injured workers. By expanding the scope of rehabilitation practitioners to include these professionals, we can improve the quality of care available to workers and ensure that rehabilitation services are comprehensive, addressing both physical and mental health needs.

We respectfully urge the committee to move forward with this important legislation. Thank you for your attention to this matter

Sincerely,

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Executive Director - Maryland
National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Maryland Chapter