

Economic Matters Committee

February 26, 2025

House Bill 1210

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

***** Support*****

Dear Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and Members of the Committee,

The Maryland Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW-MD) represents over 2,700 social workers across the state. We are writing to express our strong support for House Bill 1210, which pertains to the evaluation of permanent impairments under the Workers' Compensation system.

This legislation specifically addresses the role of the Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C) in evaluating, diagnosing, and treating mental and emotional disorders, including substance use disorders and behavioral health conditions, as part of the Workers' Compensation process.

The Health Occupations Article, Title 19-101, Section (5)(ii), authorizes the LCSW-C to independently evaluate and diagnose mental health conditions and impairments, provide treatment, and serve as an expert witness in legal proceedings. Additionally, the Labor and Employment Article and COMAR Title 14, Subtitle 09, Chapter 08 acknowledge the full scope of practice of the LCSW-C, including the authority to conduct evaluations, **make impairment determinations**, and provide medical case management.

In Maryland, there is a shortage of qualified mental health professionals capable of conducting comprehensive evaluations and providing appropriate care for injured workers. **LCSW-Cs are well-trained to address mental and emotional impairments**, and their role in medical case management ensures effective collaboration with other healthcare providers. Furthermore, LCSW-Cs are recognized as healthcare providers under both state and federal statutes, and their qualifications include the authority to authorize sick leave and determine Temporary Total Disability for injured workers.

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Given the critical role that LCSW-Cs play in supporting the mental health needs of injured workers, NASW-MD fully supports the inclusion of the LCSW-C in Section 9-721(c) as an expert witness, in accordance with Workers' Compensation Commission regulations.

We urge the Committee to give a favorable report to HB-1210.

Sincerely,

Karessa Proctor, BSW, MSW

Executive Director
National Association of Social Workers - Maryland Chapter