

Testimony for SB 522
Workers' Compensation – Evaluation of Permanent Impairments – Licensed Social Worker–Clinical
March 10, 2026
Support

Thank you, Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and members of the Finance Committee for addressing this critical issue and therefore recognizing the vital role of social work. The School of Social Work appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in favor of SB 522. This bill would permit clinical social workers to perform an evaluation for the Workers' Compensation Commission if a permanent impairment involves a behavioral or mental disorder.

Current law restricts the professionals who may perform an evaluation to a licensed psychologist or physician. The changes proposed in SB 522 better reflect that the far majority of behavioral health services are delivered by licensed social workers and they have the expertise to assess, evaluate, and treat individuals with behavior health conditions. We support the language in the bill that limits these tasks to only include a licensed social worker at the highest level of licensing, the LCSW-C, and not the other social work entry level licenses (LBSW or LMSW.) The requirements to earn this highest level of licensure include the following steps which take a minimum of over a four-year process before earning the LCSW-C.

Here is a description of the minimum requirements: (1) earn a master's degree from an accredited program; (2) successfully complete two placement practicums/professional internships – two full-days their foundation year of the master's program and three full-days in their advanced year; (3) practice social work competencies in both placements under the supervision of a licensed and experienced social worker; (4) pass all the clinical coursework which is required for the LCSW-C; (5) pass the first (of two) national licensing test administered through the National Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) or the Masters exam; (6) complete additional application requirements to earn the LMSW license; (7) work with their LMSW license for a minimum of 3,000 hours of social work experience under the supervision of a LCSW-C; (8) the work experience must be "clinical social work experience" which is defined to include: completing assessments; formulating diagnostic impressions or a diagnosis; treating mental disorders and other conditions; treating behavioral health disorders including substance use disorders, addictive disorders and other conditions; and providing psychotherapy; (9) pass the second national licensing test administered through the National Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) which tests their clinical knowledge or Clinical exam; and (10) complete a minimum of 40 hours of continuing education in social work practice every two-year period.

I share these details to highlight that the steps along the social work licensing pathway for the LCSW-C has more than screened and prepared them to provide comprehensive evaluations concerning Workers' Compensation matters.

I respectfully request a favorable committee report on SB 522.

Respectfully submitted by,



Judy L. Postmus, Ph.D., ACSW, Dean & Professor

Cc: Senator Mary Washington