



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

*Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D., Secretary*

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Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners  
4201 Patterson Ave., 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21215

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**2026 SESSION  
POSITION PAPER**

**BILL NO:** SB 874  
**COMMITTEE:** Finance  
**POSITION:** Support with Amendments

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**TITLE: Health Occupations – Social Workers – Scopes of Practice**

**BILL ANALYSIS:** For the purpose of altering the scopes of practice for licensed social workers.

**POSITION AND RATIONALE:** The Board of Social Work Examiners (the “Board”) supports SB 874 with amendments. The Board supports the intent of the bill to clarify what a licensed social worker can do; however, there are several areas which are somewhat confusing and negated changes made by recent 2020 legislation. The Board urges the bill sponsor to make the following amendments:

**Amendment 1: Page 2: Line 9** – leave in” bachelor social work or master.” Legislation passed in 2020 added the definition of independent practice. It is not clear why this language is being changed.

**Amendment 2: Page 4: Line 17** – Leave in “Counseling for alcohol and drug use and addictive behavior.” This was added in the 2020 legislative session to clarify that it is within the scope of practice for all social work licenses to provide counseling for alcohol, drug and other addictive behaviors.

**Amendment 3: Page 5: Lines 24-30; Page 6: Lines 1-3; and Page 8: Lines 10-15:** these lines completely delete references to the Licensed Certified Social Worker (LCSW) license. While the Board no longer issues this license, there are still 274 active LCSW license holders in the state. If statute language is completely removed regarding the LCSW, will they be unable to renew their license. Should consideration be given to grandfathering the current LCSWs to the LCSW-C license level?

**Amendment 4: Page 6: Lines 11-12** – “petitioning for emergency evaluation...” is removed for the Licensed Certified Social Worker – Clinical (LCSW-C) and it is not listed elsewhere in the bill. This is an important provision to the statute and removing it for the LCSW-C will significantly limit their scope of practice.

**Amendment 5: Page 7: Line 31** - the bill removes the language that a licensed bachelor social worker may not “Engage in private practice.” While they can work in private practice, an LBSW cannot be the sole owner of private practice.

**Amendment 6: Page 7: Lines 28-29** – Keep in the current use of “make a clinical diagnosis of behavioral health or emotions disorder.” The bill proposes changing the language to “diagnose a mental, emotional, or behavioral disorder.” The use of “mental disorder” has been gradually removed over the years due to stigma associated with the use of the term “mental.”

**Amendment 7: Page 8: Line 9** – as above, the bill removes the language that a licensed master social worker may not “Engage in private practice.” While they can work in private practice, an LBSW cannot be the sole owner of private practice.

Thank you for considering this testimony. The Board of Social Work Examiners respectfully requests a favorable vote with amendments on SB 874.

If you require additional information please contact Karen Richards, Executive Director of the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners at (410) 764-4722 or [karen.richards2@maryland.gov](mailto:karen.richards2@maryland.gov) or Lillian Reese, Board Legislative Liaison, at (443) 794-4757 or [lillian.reese@maryland.gov](mailto:lillian.reese@maryland.gov).

*The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.*