

**Testimony for HB 1119
Health Occupations - Social Workers - Scopes of Practice
March 4, 2026
Support with Amendment**

Thank you Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison and members of the Health Committee for addressing this important issue and recognizing the vital role of social workers in Maryland. As dean of the University of Maryland, School of Social Work, I appreciate the opportunity to support all efforts to strengthen Maryland's Social Work Practice Act.

While I support the goal of HB 1119 to update the Social Work Practice Act to address current challenges in social work practice, a legislative proposal with such sweeping changes requires careful examination and participation of invested stakeholders.


There are important areas of current social work practice that HB 1119 removes that require careful examination before elimination including:

- a. Removal of "counseling for alcohol and drug use and addictive behavior", which is currently an area of practice legislation delineated in 2020;
- b. Removal of restriction for a LBSW or LMSW to be the sole owner of a private practice, which was a restriction that legislation added in 2017;
- c. Removal, in its entirety, the LCSW license category. In Maryland, we currently have LCSWs practicing in MD and while legislation passed in 2017 that no NEW LCSW licenses would be issued, those who hold the LCSW license are currently permitted to practice and renew their LCSW;
- d. Removal from the LCSW-C scope of practice to petition for an emergency petition, which is an important ethical responsibility for clinical behavioral health professionals.
- e. Removal of language that defines the breath of advanced generalist practice (macro social work) from the scope of practice and replacing it with clinical practice terms.

While we have reviewed several versions of suggested amendments for HB 1119, they are not consistent and also create additional areas that require careful attention. Respectfully, I submit an amendment that would require the BSWE to develop revisions for the Social Work Practice Act which include the areas mentioned in the bill and submit a legislative proposal for your review in the 2027 legislative session. There is still confusion regarding the distinctions between private practice and independent practice and their relationship to the specific categories of licensure an individual holds (LBSW, LMSW, LCSW, LCSW-C) and further language in the statute could clarify practice questions.

Thank you again for your dedication to this important issue. I respectfully request a favorable committee report that would charge the BSWE to prepare revisions to the Social Work Practice Act for action in the 2027 legislative session.

Respectfully submitted by,



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