



New York State Society for Clinical Social Work, Inc.

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Memo of Support for ASWB Licensing Efforts

The New York State Society for Clinical Social Work (NYSSCSW) was founded in 1968 to address the need for professional recognition and advancement for private practice clinicians through initiating scope of practice licensing and insurance reimbursement for mental health services. NYSSCSW incorporated in 1970 and has continued to provide educational, professional and legislative services to its members. Among the notable achievements of the Society are: collaboration with other clinical social work organizations to develop a Code of Ethics; legislative efforts to increase access to clinical social work mental health services; and to establish and protect opportunities for insurance reimbursement for clinical services. The Society's initiating efforts in 2002 resulted in New York State enacting a licensing statute for clinical social workers (LCSW).

NYSSCSW continues to be a leader in providing education, expanding access to mental health services and support for the profession.

The NYSSCSW is in full support of the changes and recommendations presented by ASWB in their ongoing efforts to improve their licensing examinations for the social work profession.

The presentation by ASWB at the June 2023 Meeting of the New York State Board for Social Work was thoughtful and relevant, addressing the purpose and the competency of licensees to practice in New York State. The presentation included the relevant history of the organization, test reliability and validity procedures, as well as an explanation of how exam items are reviewed.

It is important to note that the LMSW examination, at this time, may be the only measure of minimum competency at the social work master level. Since there is no entry exam for MSW programs, there is no way to evaluate the critical skills necessary to practice.

Also, peculiar to New York State statutes, an MSW who acquires their LMSW and three years later, their LCSW, is not required to obtain continuing education credits for six (6) years beyond graduation. Therefore, the initial licensing examination is the only measure of minimum competency beyond the acquisition of Master's level education.

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