



**House  
Legislative  
Analysis  
Section**

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**LICENSE SOCIAL WORKERS**

**House Bill 5004**

Sponsor: Rep. David M. Gubow  
Committee: Public Health

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Complete to 5-15-90

**A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 5004 AS  
INTRODUCED 7-1-89**

Presently, social workers are regulated under Article 16 of the Occupational Code. The bill would repeal this part of the Occupational Code and instead add a new part to the Public Health Code to provide for the licensing of social workers with bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degrees and the registration of social workers with associate's degrees.

The new part of the Public Health Code (Part 185, "Social Work") would prohibit the practice of social work at the bachelor's or master's level or as a registered social work associate unless licensed, registered, or otherwise authorized by the bill. (No social work associates would be registered after January 1, 1995.) The bill also would create a board of social work and define its duties, impose certain confidentiality requirements on the social worker-client relationship, require social workers to give prospective clients a professional disclosure statement, and provide for limited licenses and for certain exceptions to the bill's requirements.

**Scope of practice.** The bill would not define a single scope of practice for social workers. Instead, it would define "practice of social work at the bachelor's level" and "practice of social work at the master's level."

Neither level of practice would include the practice of medicine or osteopathic medicine and surgery (including prescribing drugs or administering electroconvulsive therapy).

Both levels of practice would include:

- (1) "the knowledge of human development and behavior; social, economic, and cultural institutions; and counseling techniques and the interaction of that knowledge with social work values, principles, and techniques in providing people with human services" and
- (2) "helping communities, organizations, or groups improve their social or health services."

"Practice of social work at the bachelor's level" also would include "social casework, including, but not limited to, social assessments, planning, and intervention with individuals, families, couples, or groups," while "practice of social work at the master's level" would include:

- (1) "providing social casework" and
- (2) "psychotherapy applied within the scope of social work values, principles, and techniques; psychosocial diagnosis and treatment of emotional and behavioral functioning; and social assessments, planning, and intervention with individuals, families, couples, or groups."

**Categories of social workers.** Basically, the bill would replace existing categories of social workers (registered or

certified under the existing social worker part of the Occupational Code) with new categories. Social workers who currently are registered social work technicians could apply to become "registered social work associates," registered social workers could apply to become "licensed bachelor social workers," and certified social workers could apply to become "licensed master social workers."

A "registered social work associate" would have to have an associate's degree in social work (including supervised instructional field work) and could practice only under the supervision of a licensed master social worker and only in a hospital, agency, or clinic (or other board-approved arrangement). Registered social work technicians would be issued certificates of registration as social work associates if they were registered when the bill was enacted and if they applied to the board for the new registration within one year of the effective date of the bill (though this section of the bill would be repealed on January 1, 1995).

A "licensed bachelor social worker" would have to have completed a bachelor's degree in social work and have practiced social work for at least two years under the supervision of a licensed master social worker (for two years after the effective date of the bill, the supervision could be done by a social worker with a master's or doctoral degree in social work). Licensed bachelor social workers could work only for an agency or in a hospital or clinic (or other board-approved arrangement), and their practice would be limited to social casework ("including, but not limited to, social assessments, planning, and intervention with individuals, families, couples, or groups") and "helping communities, organizations, or groups improve their social or health services." Registered social workers would be granted full licenses as licensed bachelor social workers if they were registered at the time the bill was enacted and if they applied for the new license within one year after the bill took effect.

A "licensed master social worker" would have to have a master's or doctoral degree in social work, two years of practice in social work supervised by a licensed master social worker (though for two years after the effective date of the bill, supervision could be by someone with a master's or doctoral degree in social work). Licensed master social workers would not be limited with regard to their place of practice, and, in addition to the practice allowed to bachelor's social workers (i.e. social casework and helping communities, etc. improve their social or health services), could engage in psychotherapy and "psychosocial diagnosis and treatment of emotional and behavioral functioning." Certified social workers would be granted full licenses as licensed master social workers if they were certified at the time the bill was enacted and if they applied for the new license within a year of the effective date of the bill.

**Limited licenses.** Limited licenses, which would be valid for up to three years, would be granted to people who had completed all the educational requirements for licensure

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and who were doing their two years of supervised social work. They would have to be supervised by a licensed master social worker and could practice only in an agency, hospital, or clinic (or other board-approved arrangement). The board could renew a limited license one time for up to two years.

**Board of Social Work.** A six-member Board of Social Work would be created in the Department of Public Health, consisting of one public member and five members who were social workers (three of these would have to be direct providers of services, one would have to teach, train, or do research in social work, and at least one of the five would have to be a licensed bachelor social worker).

The board would be required to:

- establish by administrative rule the academic degrees and supervised experience required of the new categories of social workers;
- issue the appropriate license or registration to social workers who were registered or certified when the bill was enacted and who applied for licensure or registration within a year after the bill was enacted;
- grant limited licenses to people who had completed all the educational requirements for licensure;
- require proof of at least 60 hours of continuing education from licensees or registrants applying for renewal;
- establish public policy for regulating social workers;
- adopt a code of social work ethics (including a requirement that licensees not practice in areas for which they were not trained);
- publish and update annually a list of licensed and registered social workers.

**Confidentiality.** Communications between social workers and their clients in the course of professional practice would be confidential and disclosed only with the client's permission (or, if the client was a minor, with the permission of the child's parent or legal guardian).

**Professional disclosure.** Social workers would be required to provide prospective clients with a professional disclosure statement before engaging in social work services. A copy of the disclosure statement would have to be included with the original application for licensure, and any changes in the statement would have to be filed with the Department of Public Health within 30 days after the change was made.

The statement would have to include all of the following:

- (1) The social worker's name, business address, and telephone number;
- (2) A description of the social worker's practice, education and experience, and fee schedule; and
- (3) The name, address, and telephone number of the Department of Public Health.

**Exceptions.** The bill would specifically exempt from its provisions other statutorily authorized professionals (including professional counselors, professional educators, and clergymembers) practicing their professions or callings, volunteers working for community or nonprofit charitable organizations, and social work students participating in supervised internships.

**Repeal.** The bill would repeal Article 16 of the Occupational Code (Public Act 229 of 1980, MCL 3391601 to 339.1610), which presently regulates social workers.