

Date: March 4, 2022
To: Rep. Tina Lieblich, Chair & Members of the House Health Finance and Policy Committee & Rep. Becker-Finn, HF 2743-0 Bill Chief Author
From: Kate Zacher-Pate, LSW, Executive Director MN Board of Social Work
Subject: **Support for HF 2743-0 Sections 4, 5, 6, 7**

BOSW Mission

The Board of Social Work (BOSW) mission is protecting the public by regulating the practice of social work. There are currently over 17,000 social work licensees in Minnesota. The BOSW supports and values a diverse and culturally responsive workforce and is committed to reducing unnecessary licensing barriers.

BOSW Support for HF 2743-0, Sections 4, 5, 6, 7

I am writing as the Executive Director of the BOSW to support [HF 2743-0](#), specifically Sections 4, 5, 6, and 7. This bill would amend the BOSW Practice Act supervision requirements in MN Statutes 148E.100, subdivision 3; MS 148E.105, subdivision 3; MS 148E.106, subdivision 3; and MS 148E.110, subdivision 7.

The BOSW supports the bill's intent to remove the limitation on "virtual" supervision hours to meet BOSW licensing requirements. The BOSW Legislation & Rules Committee has been reviewing MS 148E for several years with a lens to remove unnecessary licensing barriers while maintaining standards. This bill aligns with BOSW Committee recommendations, which the BOSW has not yet brought forward in a legislative proposal.

Virtual Supervision Increases Access and Limits Barriers

- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the BOSW approved a blanket variance provision, under MS 148E.035, on March 20, 2020, to remove the limitation on "virtual" supervision to address safety and access concerns necessary to obtain supervision. This variance remains in place with no reported negative consequences.
- Virtual supervision increases access and limits barriers:
 - provides a safe option to comply with supervision requirements while limiting risk of COVID-19 exposure
 - increases opportunity for licensees in rural communities with fewer licensing supervisors to obtain the required supervision
 - reduces barriers by decreasing travel time and costs
 - creates relevant regulation integrating technology
 - provides responsive policy to licensees and increases supervision resources

Conclusion & Contact Information

The BOSW asks your support of HF 2743-0, Sections 4, 5, 6, and 7, to support the BOSW in reducing unnecessary licensing barriers while maintaining standards, creating relevant regulation, and responding to stakeholders. Board members and staff are committed to continued work with all stakeholders to ensure diversity in the workforce, while licensing qualified, professional, ethical, and accountable social workers.

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