

**HB2208-Proponent Testimony, Written Only:**

Reducing certain requirements for licensure by the behavioral sciences regulatory board, requiring board approval to provide clinical social work supervision and expanding out-of-state temporary permits to practice.

Kelly Jones, LMSW

Associate Professor of Practice | Director of Field Education

KU School of Social Welfare

3/17/21

Dear Chairman Hilderbrand and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. Currently, I am the KU School of Social Welfare Director of Field Education and an Associate Professor of Social Welfare Practice. I have coordinated, overseen, and evaluated approximately 1,700 social work practicum placements. I am a proponent of HB2208 because it benefits social work practicum students and positively impacts Kansas's workforce enhancement efforts in the social work field.

In particular, I support amendments to HB 2208 Sec. 6. K.S.A. 65-6306 (C), which removes the proposed 200 and current 350 direct client contact hours language.

- No other state or territory requires a specific number of direct client contact hours within a social work practicum for a clinical social work license.
- The 200 or 350-hour direct client contact requirement is not supported anywhere in the social work field education literature.
- The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), which accredits all United States social work programs of higher education, does not require a specific number of direct client contact hours in a practicum.

Field Education is considered the signature pedagogy of social work education. Within that pedagogy, CSWE does prioritize a set amount of practicum hours<sup>1</sup>, but those hours are not broken down by direct client contact time as described in the Kansas statutes. To some extent, the diversity of social work practice does not lend itself well to the metric. (Per my testimony on 2/23, one practicum student may be using brief interventions with Veterans seeking housing. Another may be practicing telehealth talk-therapy sessions in medically underserved areas of Kansas. Many students are practicing in our k-12 schools; and others provide emotional support to a caregiver for a person with dementia in a long term care setting.) Depending on students' practicum setting, they might not meet the State of Kansas prescribed direct client-contact [within their second year practicum] requirement for LSCSW licensure. **Those students routinely report to me that if they do not meet the Kansas direct client contact practicum requirement for LSCSW licensure, they intend to leave Kansas and seek a clinical license in Missouri, Colorado, and elsewhere.** It is common for students to cite not meeting the hour requirement among primary reasons for moving to neighboring states. As Field Director, I provide references for their licensures outside of Kansas, most frequently in neighboring states.

To graduate with a MSW degree from an accredited social work school, per CSWE, students must complete 900 practicum hours over the course of **two** years. Across social work programs, most commonly the hours are divided nearly equally across two years. This means MSW students in their second year practicum complete between 400-520 hours. Using our neighboring states' flagship MSW programs as examples, their programs require the following number of hours in the second year practicum: University of Denver- 450; University of Oklahoma 505; University of Nebraska-Omaha 512; and University of Missouri-KC 520. Conversely, all

1. CSWE requires 900 total practicum hours, spread out over a two-year practicum experience. One practicum year is generalist practice and the subsequent year is advanced practice.

Kelly Jones, LMSW: kellyjones@ku.edu or 785-864-2663

HB 2208: Reducing certain requirements for licensure by the behavioral sciences regulatory board, requiring board approval to provide clinical social work supervision and expanding out-of-state temporary permits to practice.

Kansas MSW programs, require 720 hours in the second year MSW practicum. The primary driving factor for Kansas second year MSW practicum being 200+ hours higher than peer social work programs is the current BSRB statute related to direct client contact. For every hour a student is directly with a client, it is reasonable to assume that they will spend an hour completing related work that is not face-to-face contact. (Activities may include resource allocation and documentation, among other things.) To ensure KS MSW students meet the 350 hour BSRB requirement, KS Field Directors essentially double 350 to 720 and require 50% direct client contact at all practicum sites. This KS second year practicum requirement is among the highest in the country.

- **NOTE:** Students' practicum course credit hours are based on the number of hours a student is in practicum. State mandated increases in practicum hours translates to increases in tuition for social work students. This is a particularly concerning requirement when factoring in historically low wages for social work services.

HB 2208 rectifies the disparity in practicum requirements for social work students when compared to their peers in neighboring states; and by extension, works to retain Kansas graduates of social work programs in Kansas.

Thank you for reviewing my testimony and for your service to our State,

Kelly Jones, LMSW

1. CSWE requires 900 total practicum hours, spread out over a two-year practicum experience. One practicum year is generalist practice and the subsequent year is advanced practice.