

**BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES REGULATORY BOARD
SOCIAL WORK ADVISORY COMMITTEE
OCTOBER 17, 2022
APPROVED MINUTES**

- I. Call to Order.** The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Cynthia Schendel at 1:00 p.m.

Social Work Advisory Committee Members. Advisory Committee members present by Zoom included Cynthia Schendel, Andrea Perdomo-Morales, Sarah Berens, Mary Gill, Mike Gillett, Angi Heller-Workman, Jane Holzrichter, Catherine Rech, Eric Schoenecker, Cristin Stice, and Robin Unruh. Donna Hoener-Queal and Lee Ann Gingery were absent.

BSRB Staff. Staff members present by Zoom included David Fye and Leslie Allen.

Guests. were present by Zoom.

- II. Agenda Approval.** Mike Gillett moved to approve the agenda as written. Jane Holzrichter seconded. The motion passed.

III. Public Comment

A. Discussion on Communications Related to Release of Demographic Information for Social Work Examination Pass Rates by Representative Susan Ruiz.

Representative Susan Ruiz, also a Licensed Specialist Clinical Social Worker (LSCSW) licensed in Kansas, spoke to the Advisory Committee about communications she received and concerns on the disparities in passage rates by certain groups of individuals taking the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) licensing examinations, the possibility of racial bias, and possible solutions moving forward.

B. Presentation on Release of Exam Pass Rate Information by Representatives from ASWB including Dr. Stacey Hardy-Chandler, Chief Executive Officer for ASWB; Dale Atkinson, ASWB Legal Counsel; Jennifer Henkel, Senior Director of Member Engagement and Regulatory Services; and Cara Sanner, Regulatory Support Services Program Manager for ASWB.

Dr. Stacey Hardy-Chandler presented information on the mission of ASWB, the development process for the license examination, and ASWB's approach to disparate outcomes. Dr. Hardy-Chandler noted an examination is an important requirement for licensure, along with supervised education and adequate lack of disciplinary issues, to provide an objective standard to protect the public with a measure that is legally defensible. Dale Atkinson, legal counsel for ASWB, explained how the license examination is defensible, reliable, and valid. Mr. Atkinson explained that the examination provides a uniform measure that is less subjective than other requirements for licensure. Dr. Hardy-Chandler provided information on examination development, noting that

almost 200 individuals are involved, including approximately 90 item writers. It was noted that ASWB item writers are licensed social workers, selected using demographic, geographic, and practice setting diversity. There is a universal pass score across states and jurisdictions and there are also different versions of the test that are rotated. Dr. Hardy-Chandler explained anti-bias measures ASWB is taking to rule-out certain questions and noted that the release of the examination score information reveals a problem, but is not the cause of the problem.

Steps ASWB is taking currently include forming a Social Work Workforce Coalition to expand the diversity of voices contributing to the development of the practice analysis and the examinations, to identify participants and questions for community conversations to ensure a variety of perspectives are heard, and to provide education on exam development and pass rate data; preparing for a social work census in 2024; making more educational resources available to educators for free; and hosting community conversation meetings to listen to individuals and groups on this topic. In addition to the 94-page report on the examination release data, ASWB has state-specific data on its website (ASWB.org), which allows for the results to be broken down by schools. Dr. Hardy-Chandler stated that in review of the examination report, it shows that disparities are not uniform between states, nor between schools in the same state. It appears that pass rates for some schools do not show disparities and she encouraged conversations to continue at the school level to determine what methods are being used at some schools with higher passage rates compared to methods used at schools that are showing more disparities or lower passage rates.

David Fye, Executive Director for the BSRB, stated the BSRB recently received a letter from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), which urged state licensing agencies to suspend the use of the ASWB examinations as a requirements for licensure and to consider graduation from a CSWE-accreditation program evidence of beginning competence to practice social work in place of passage of the examination (aside from the clinical level of license, which would still require passage of the ASWB examination). Dr. Hardy-Chandler noted that most states require passage of a national examination in statutes or regulations and there are currently no other national social work examinations, so most states would be unable to suspend the use of the examination. She also noted that evaluation of the examination is ongoing and spoke to the value of both educational competency and practice competency and noted the importance of the examination to measure practice competency.

Members of the Advisory Committee asked how the social work demographic information compares to examination outcomes for other professions. Dr. Hardy-Chandler noted that most other professions have not released this type of demographic examination information and stated that some professions are having difficulty collecting this type of demographic data. Dr. Hardy-Chandler noted that ASWB is trying to look at factors that could be negatively impacting individual's ability to pass the test, such as test anxiety, and reported that 47% of 2022 license examination registrants reported that their schools never mentioned a licensing

examination, while other schools better support their students to prepare for passing the examination. It was noted that the Oregon Legislature allocated additional funding to assist exam-takers, starting with members of marginalized groups.

IV. Minutes Approval. Eric Schoenecker moved to approve the minutes from the Advisory Committee meeting on August 16, 2022. Angi Heller-Workman seconded. The motion passed.

V. Executive Director's Report. The Executive Director for the BSRB, reported on the agency updates and activities at past BSRB Board meetings. Mike Gillett moved to express support for the creation of a new temporary license for applicants for licensure who graduated from programs that are “in Candidacy” for accreditation by CSWE. Robin Unruh seconded. The motion passed.

VI. Old Business

A. Discussion on Draft Language for Social Work Multi-State Compact. At the past Social Work Advisory Committee meeting, several individuals presented information on draft language for a multi-state compact for the social work profession. One of the requirements in the multi-state compact is passage of a national examination. It was noted that there are concerns with this requirement being included in the compact language, due to the pass rate disparities for individuals who have taken the ASWB license examinations. It was noted that there will likely be another version of the draft language of the compact, but at this time it is unclear whether the final compact language will be available in bill form for consideration by states during the 2023 Legislative session. The Advisory Committee expressed a desire to revisit this topic at a future meeting.

B. Discussion on ASWB Exam Pass Rate Information. It was noted that a small number of states do not require an examination or all levels of licensure or have recently removed the requirement of passing an examination. Advisory Committee members discussed demographic breakdown of examination pass rates from other exams, which showed some similar groupings by pass rate. It was noted that a national examination is required for licensure in Kansas, so if the BSRB paused the requirement of a national examination, the agency would either have to stop licensing social workers or would be in violation of the law. Members discussed the value of having greater accessibility to examination test prep materials.

C. Discussion on Workforce Issues. Due to time constraints the Advisory Committee was unable to discuss this topic further.

D. Update on Clinical Supervision, Including Supervisor Training and Board-Approved Supervisor Status. Due to time constraints the Advisory Committee was unable to discuss this topic further.

E. Update on Continuing Education-Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Due to time constraints the Advisory Committee was unable to discuss this topic further.

VII. New Business

A. K.A.R. 102-1-15(g) License Psychology Regulation on Continuing Education. The Executive Director summarized K.A.R. 102-1-15(g), which is a regulation unique to the Licensed Psychology profession, which allows members of that profession to request additional time from the BSRB to complete continuing education hours, if they are approaching their renewal deadline and they can show good cause for needing additional time to complete their hours. The Executive Director noted the Board would be considering whether other professions would benefit from having similar language in their regulations.

B. Discussion on Possible Regulation for Care of Clients in Crisis. Due to time constraints the Advisory Committee did not discuss this topic and will move this discussion to the next meeting.

C. Update on Kansas Fights Addiction Grant Review Board Appointee. Due to time constraints the Advisory Committee was unable to discuss this item.

D. Discussion on Dates for Meetings in 2023. Due to time constraints the Advisory Committee did not discuss this topic and will revisit this topic to the next meeting.

VIII. Committee Discussion on Items for Next Meeting. Advisory Committee members requested to continue discussing the report from ASWB on the examination pass rates at the next meeting.

IX. Next Meeting. The next meeting of the Advisory Committee will be on Tuesday, December 20, 2022

VIII. Adjournment. Lee Ann Gingery moved to adjourn the meeting. Mike Gillett seconded. The motion passed.