

Our Mission

The legislature declares that, in order to safeguard the public health, safety, and welfare of the people of this state against unauthorized, unqualified and improper practice of social work, it is necessary that a proper regulatory authority be established and adequately provided for.

**JANUARY
2014**

News | Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

LABSWE had a very busy and productive 2013. We are reorganizing and restructuring to better protect the public and be responsive to the more than 7,900 credentialed social workers in Louisiana.

LABSWE has shared staff and office space with the LA Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (LBESPA) and the LA State Board of Examiners in Dietetics and Nutrition (LBEDN) since the 1980s. This arrangement was mutually beneficial for many years; however LABSWE's needs have greatly changed and our licensees exceed those of LBESPA with 3,659 licensees and LBEDN with 1,210 licensees.

LABSWE hired SSA Consultants to research the issues and challenges related to separating the organization and operations of LABSWE from the operations of the other two boards. Some of you were randomly selected to participate in a feedback survey regarding our operations. After interviewing and

observing office staff and interviews with stakeholders, it was determined that to strengthen and sustain the organization, we should separate staff and operations from the other two boards.

Staffing changes began in November and the official reset date was January 1, 2014. We now have a full-time administrator whereas before we had an administrator 60% of the time. We have two administrative assistants and a receptionist. We are continuing to evaluate our staffing needs as we become more automated and consider outsourcing opportunities. Our goal is to be efficient, innovative and current with available technologies.

LABSWE, LBESPA, and LBEDN will continue to share office space until the termination of the lease in 2016.

Changes will continue through 2014 as we continue to fulfill our mission.

Lisa L. Lipsey, LCSW | Chairperson

18550 Highland Road, Suite B
Baton Rouge, LA 70809
Phone: (225) 756.3470
800.521.1941 (LA Only)
Email: socialwork@labswe.org
www.labswe.org

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Update From The Supervision Consultant

Gina L. Orihuela, LCSW-BACS, ND, CTN

One of the overarching goals of clinical supervision is to enhance the social worker's ability to provide quality client care. Supervision serves as a means of professional growth and development and improved outcomes in treatment. The plan of supervision is the guide for this process. It should clearly outline the supervisee's learning needs. Each learning objective should be individualized for the supervisee's social work position and should be supported by learning experiences and indicators of achievement. Ideal goals are specific,



measurable, attainable, realistic, and time targeted. Goals generally revolve around learning, developing, enhancing, and/or demonstrating professional knowledge, skills, values, and ethics. Learning experiences are action oriented. These tasks or assignments are designed to help the supervisee work towards goal attainment. Indicators of achievement are the criteria used by the supervisor to determine whether or not the supervisee has attained his/her goals. Indicators should be objective whenever possible. A great majority of revisions to the plan of supervision involve indicators of achievement.

Sample indicators of achievement include: direct observation of the supervisee's work; client satisfaction surveys; evaluation of supervisee's verbal contributions in supervision; maintaining case records that are in compliance with quality assurance standards; presenting summaries of continuing education learning in supervision; generating solutions to ethical dilemmas; incorporating the results of a self-evaluation into client work; developing treatment plans that support client concerns; applying a theoretical technique; developing and presenting an agency in-service; completing a program evaluation; maintaining a database of community resources, etc.

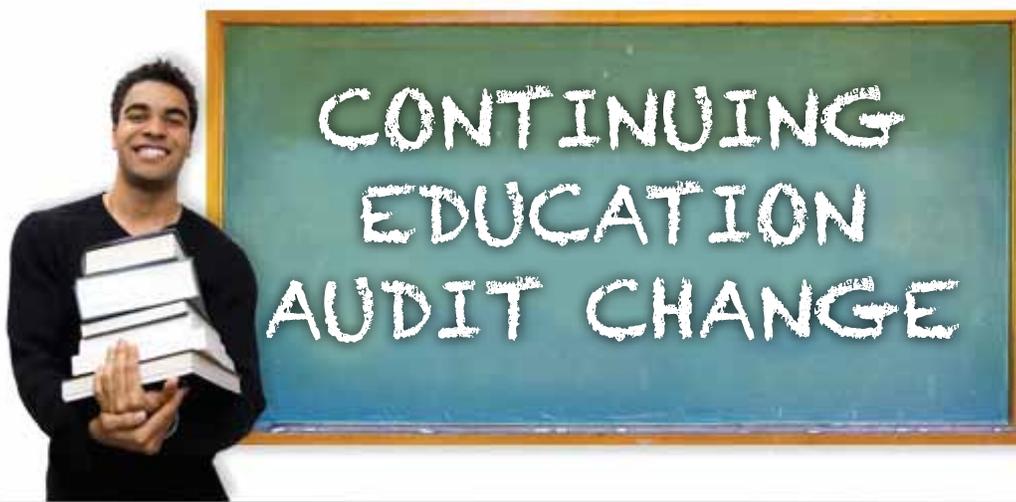
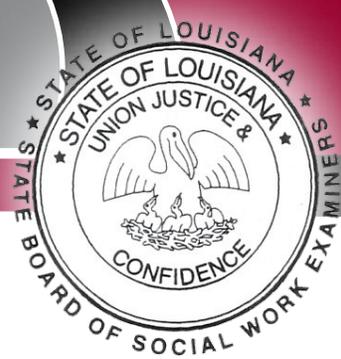
Professional Growth is another challenging area of the plan of supervision. This area includes the supervisee's acceptance of responsibility for personal learning and professional growth. Although it is a broad area, goals should be specific and measurable. Sample goals include: improving knowledge of a specific theory; learning more about a specific technique; obtaining continuing education in a particular area of social work; dealing with the emotional implications of working with a particular client group, etc.

Supervisors and supervisees should keep in mind that there are typically two to three identified goals in each area as the plan is a two to three year plan. Initial plans should be sent to LABSWE within 60 days of the first supervisory session. Revisions are due to LABSWE within 30 days.

Supervision is a collaborative process, and there is a shared responsibility between supervisors and supervisees to safeguard, maintain, and submit records timely.

A Board Orientation Workshop is required to become a Board Approved Clinical Supervisor (BACS). This two hour workshop is offered by LABSWE, free of charge, six times a year. This training is also open to LCSW-BACS that would like a refresher on the requirements for supervision and completing a plan of supervision.

LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS



Beginning in 2014, those randomly selected for continuing education audits will be notified by certified mail in July, after the collection period, rather than in June, as has been our practice. This change will accomplish two goals. It will streamline and reduce paper exchange between LABSWE and our auditor ASWB making the process more efficient. Additionally, it will be more reflective of a true audit if social workers are notified after the collection period.

Please remember that all social workers are required to have 20 hours of continuing education including 3 hours of ethics every two years. LCSWs are required to obtain 10 of their 20 hours in the area of clinical social work. Rule 317 of the Rules, Standards, and Procedures specify all of the requirements for continuing education.

Also, ensure that LABSWE has your current mailing address by logging in to the database at www.labswe.org and updating your address, if necessary.

Board Meeting Dates for 2014

LABSWE falls under the Louisiana Open Meetings Act. This law specifies that every meeting shall be open to the public, unless the subject of the meeting relates to the character and professional competence of a person, or to the investigation of a complaint or negotiation of litigation. Compliance Hearings (*to ensure people comply with the licensing law*) and Disciplinary Hearings (*to address public complaints about professional practice*) fall under the open meeting law. The schedule for each LABSWE meeting is posted 24 hours ahead of the scheduled meeting. Any member of the public who wishes to address the board may submit a request in writing at least 24 hours before a public meeting to be included on the agenda. All votes are public, as are all minutes of the meeting.

All meetings begin at 8:30 A.M. and are scheduled to be held in the LABSWE office in Baton Rouge. Meetings carry over into Saturday if necessary.

2014 BOARD MEETING DATES
January 17 • February 21
March 28 • April 25 • May 23
June 27 • August 1 • September 5
October 17 • November 21
December 19



Update From The Complaint Consultant *Jacqueline Shellington, LCSW-BACS*

The Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners has had a Complaints Consultant for the last 18 months. The role of the consultant is to provide guidance to the persons authorized to investigate complaints made against social workers and to assist the Assistant Attorney General in the development of appropriate remediation for social workers who have violated the Louisiana Social Work Practice Act and the Rules, Standards and Procedures. The consultant, with the AAG and the Board Administrator, recommends to the Board that a complaint be dismissed for failure to rise to the level of a violation, or the findings indicate a violation has occurred and further action by the Board is indicated.

Social Work complaints in the last 18 months that progressed to investigation and, often disciplinary action, generally fell into one of the following categories:

Practicing while Impaired. Generally alcohol and substance abuse come to mind and this was often the case. However, there were also social workers who practiced with impairments due to mental illness.

Fraud. Reports of fraud were validated in cases where social workers claimed to provide services to clients without doing so; they falsified records, documenting sessions that did not occur. Some, but not all, fell under Federal jurisdiction when the social worker was convicted of Medicare or Medicaid fraud.

Not all charges were due to overt acts of fraud by the social worker. Some found they were reported when they had seen a client; however, due to the documentation program required, they documented the minimum amount of time allowed by the program, which was significantly more than the time actually spent with the client.

Confidentiality and Exploitation. A social worker was reported for selling confidential client information.

Practicing outside the scope of the social worker's credential. This included practicing at a higher level than credentialed, operating as a private practitioner without the LCSW license or outside a government setting, or practicing social work without any credential.

Boundary violations. Reports of social workers having sexual contact with clients, recent former clients, work subordinates and BACS supervisees were substantiated. This included kissing and hugging to intercourse.

There were also charges of social workers establishing personal or business relationships with current clients. There were also charges of exploitation through over involvement with clients by taking unsolicited actions on behalf of the client that were against agency policy.

(Contd on p.5)





Update From The Complaint Consultant

Jacqueline Shellington, LCSW-BACS
(cont'd from p. 4)

Misconceptions of the role and power of LABSWE. Some social workers thought it was optional to participate in investigations of the Board or to follow the terms of their Consent Agreement and Orders.

What action was taken? Some of the complaints were found after investigation to not rise to the level of a violation of the Practice Act or Rules, or to be outside the scope of the Board. Some were dismissed due to a lack of evidence required for prosecution. The rest resulted in further action, either through a Consent Agreement and Order, or a hearing before the Board. Disciplinary action taken by the Board is public record and can be found on the website at www.labswe.org.

How to avoid disciplinary action? Most social workers want to, and do, practice ethically. Make sure you understand the Practice Act and Rules under which you practice as a social worker. Have a support group of fellow social workers to discuss ethical concerns. If you are in an agency setting, utilize your supervisor or ethics committee. Join a professional social work organization and utilize the membership benefits. Lastly, always document.

INTRODUCING



Kathie L. Pohlman, LCSW-BACS, MBA
*Impaired Professional
Program Manager*

Kathie Pohlman has been selected for the contract position of Impaired Professional Program Manager. Kathie earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology, Social Work and Sociology from Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois, followed by her Masters of Social Work and Masters of Business Administration from Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Board Approved Clinical Supervisor. Over the course of more than 30 years, her career has been primarily in the fields of clinical and executive management. She is currently employed full time as a Recovering Nurse Program Manager for the Louisiana State Board of Nursing.



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18550 Highland Road, Suite B
Baton Rouge, LA 70809

Phone: (225) 756.3470 / 800.521.1941 (LA Only)

Email: socialwork@labswe.org

www.labswe.org