



## 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.

JUNE 2020

# News | Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners

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## From The Chair

*John S. Shalett, LCSW-BACS*

I have been searching for thoughts to share in this moment. Anger, fear, and sadness drive my desire to understand the pain the black community feels and my need to provide solace.

The deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery are tragic. Each loss leaves an indelible scar on our country that calls us to recognize we have failed and to ask how we can be better.

As an industry committed to social justice, we must speak openly and forcefully about the trauma caused by racism and become better advocates for social justice everywhere we can.

### *If not now, when?*

There is no question that society is broken. The very institutions charged with providing for and keeping safe our

most vulnerable populations have failed. And, it is arguable that the historic and inherent bias that caused the failure is impeding the path forward. The time has come for our industry to address this fact and demand actionable change of ourselves and of our society.

### *If not us, who?*

As individuals we must “speak up and speak out” against discrimination, violence, oppression and institutional racism every time we see it. As an industry of social workers, we can become an unwavering collective to address the long history of bias that has permeated every part of the society we occupy.

### *If our leaders won't, why us?*

We all have an inherent belief in the ability to become better. If we didn't, we would not be social workers.

We also know that change in leadership will not be enough.

*Continued on page 3...*

John Shalett, LCSW-BACS  
**Chairperson**  
New Orleans, LA

Brent Villemarette,  
LCSW-BACS  
**Vice Chairperson**  
Opelousas, LA

Ruth Weinzettle,  
LCSW-BACS  
**Secretary-Treasurer**  
Alexandria, LA

Jennifer Burch,  
LCSW-BACS  
**Board Member**  
Baton Rouge, LA

Evan J. Bergeron, ESQ  
**Consumer Member**  
New Orleans, LA

Ada Nelson, RSW  
**Board Member**  
Gretna, LA

LaTonya Charles, LMSW  
**Board Member**  
Alexandria, LA

BOARD MEMBERS

**IN THIS ISSUE:** • From The Chair • Legislative Session Light on Major Changes for Social Workers, but Special Sessions Loom • Updates from LABSWE • Effective July 1, 2020 Changes to Rule 503

## Legislative Session Light on Major Changes for Social Workers, but Special Sessions Loom

The 2020 regular session of the Louisiana Legislature began as a potentially significant event for social work practice and regulation in Louisiana. But like for most things in 2020, the ongoing pandemic of COVID-19 had other plans. For social work practitioners, the story lies in what didn't happen rather than what did.

After more than a year of work and input from stakeholders across the state, the Inter-organization Committee (IOC) submitted proposed revisions to the Social Work Practice Act. Senator Joe Bouie filed SB 389 on behalf of the IOC and other interested groups, and the bill was referred to the Senate Health and Welfare Committee. The time constraints of the session prevented the committee from hearing the bill, and it was never acted on. Several other bills the board was following failed to advance through the legislative process. This included changes to public record and public meeting laws and reporting requirements for the board.

On the other hand, a hodgepodge of licensing changes were enacted and could affect applicants and practitioners going forward.

The surprise of the session came after legislators returned from their initial COVID-19 related recess. A task force created by the legislature recommended that licensing fees on businesses, as well as various other business fees and taxes, be suspended for one year. House Speaker Clay Schexnayder filed HCR 71, which would "suspend licensing fees imposed on businesses by state agencies and licensing boards". The proponents of the resolution were questioned multiple times and assured legislators that the resolution would apply to businesses and not to individuals, in accordance with the resolution's plain language. Since the board licenses individuals and not businesses, this resolution would not apply to social work practitioners.

A pair of bills authored by Rep. Mike Echols, HBs 449 and 530, further define telehealth services and provide that insurance plans shall cover such services. Several social work practitioners testified before the board's legislation review committee in favor of the changes. These bills are awaiting the governor's signature.

As to new applicants for licensure, Rep. Julie Emerson's HB 498 requires the board to waive initial licensure fees for new applicants who receive certain types of public financial assistance or whose income is less than double the federal poverty line (excluding new applicants who are full time students at the time of or immediately prior to applying for licensure). All other first time applicants would be entitled to a payment plan if they request one. The bill actually applies to initial examination fees as well but excludes those licensing authorities who contract with third parties to administer their exams, as the board does. This bill is awaiting the governor's signature and would become effective June 30, 2021.

The legislature is currently meeting in special session until June 30, 2020. The board is monitoring this session for any bills that may affect the practice or licensing of social work, but the board is not aware of any at this time.

We hope there will be an opportunity in a second special session this fall to address issues not yet resolved, including revisions to the practice act. If not, these revisions will likely be postponed to the regular session of 2021.

As a reminder, any interested person may request that the board's legislation committee hold a public hearing to consider a pending bill or resolution. If you are aware of a pending legislative instrument that could affect the practice, regulation, or credentialing of social work, you may send a request for hearing to the legislation committee through its chairman, Evan J. Bergeron, at [ebergeron@labswe.org](mailto:ebergeron@labswe.org).





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## **From The Chair**

There has been no more drastic a change from President Obama to President Trump. While we can debate the causal effect of such change, we know that simply changing the current political leadership will not singularly result in institutional change required at this moment.

***We all come to this moment on a different path, we are all here together.***

I was raised in Washington, DC in the 1950's and 1960's. I feel blessed to have grown up in a family where faith, service, and justice were a part of the fabric of my family.

I attended Religious School from first grade through high school. My Rabbi was instrumental in my learning and development as an individual who has become a lifelong committed member of the Jewish faith. He modeled for me the teachings and tenets of both Social Action and Social Justice.

My learning in religious school formed my desire to use my voice and my understanding of my responsibility to any community that welcomes me to participate. I do not believe it was by accident that my Confirmation Speech (11th Grade) focused on Deuteronomy 16:18 and 16:20. For me, 16:18 speaks to the core of Judaism. *"You shall not judge unfairly."*

As part of a youth group in the 1960's, my attraction to social work began. I volunteered in a variety of social service agencies that permitted me to do so. In addition to my religious and family upbringing, the forces of the civil rights and Vietnam era guided me to social work and service.

This started in the military. I entered the U.S. Army in 1969, serving as a Social Work Officer on active duty for six years. I was questioned, and I questioned myself during this time -- how could I foster social justice and fair treatment to others while wearing a Uniform during the Vietnam Conflict?

During this time, my personal perspective shifted as well. I married and became a father, further informing and impacting my conscious and subconscious journey in a society that was in trauma as we experienced pain and anxiety caused by the assassination of leaders such as Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr, the Vietnam conflict, and the impeachment of the President of the United States.

***Perspectives cause divisions, divisions create bias.***

I don't fully know why, but I believe that my experience in the military actually taught me to better recognize intolerance and prejudice in myself and others.

One night on my way home from the base, while stopped at a red light, an individual noticed I was in uniform. He jumped onto the hood of my car and proceeded to urinate on my windshield. Initially, I was mortified, looked straight ahead, waited for the light to turn green, and continued home.

"You shall not judge unfairly" -- to me, wearing a uniform in service of our country was a point of pride, to this individual it was a source of power or corruption or some other thing that caused him to act as he did. Bias caused this incident. Bias also formed my pause in that moment which kept me from listening or engaging someone protesting the symbol of the uniform I was wearing. Bias prevented me from a moment of understanding and an opportunity to share my perspective.

***We won't always have the answer, but we must always seek it***

As a social worker, as a husband, as a parent and grandparent, I strive to teach that every difficult instance makes us stronger. The collective experience of my personal and professional life continues to teach me about myself, about my place in society, about my faith, and about my journey. I have not always gotten it right, but I have always tried.

*Continued on page 7...*



## Updates from LABSWE

### **Board Elections**

At the board meeting on June 12, 2020 board members reelected John Shalett, LCSW-BACS, to serve as Chairperson, Brent Villemarette, LCSW-BACS, to serve as Vice Chairperson and Ruth Weinzettle, LCSW-BACS, to serve as Secretary-Treasurer.

### **Board Meetings**

Board meetings have been conducted via Webex during the ongoing pandemic of COVID-19. A HUGE shoutout to Ruth Weinzettle and Andrew Fultz for hosting the meetings. Many of you have signed on to listen to the public portion of the meetings and received continuing education credit. It is unknown at this time if the meeting scheduled for July 17 will be in-person or virtual.

### **Certificates, Minutes and other official documents**

There is a backlog of certificates, board meeting minutes and other official documents that have not been signed due to board meetings not being held in-person.

### **Continuing Education**

Board members voted on June 12, 2020 to waive the in-person continuing education requirements for the July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021 collection period. All hours can be obtained via distance learning.

Although the current continuing education collection period was extended until September 30, 2020, the rule that allows educational offerings completed in the month of June to count for either the current or subsequent collection period has not changed. Enter continuing education events for 2020-2021 in your dashboard after renewing your license this year.

### **Renewal**

Renewal opened June 1, 2020. There was a delay with printing the renewal notice, so the notices are going out the week of June 15th. We attempted to pull the addresses of those that already renewed, but please disregard if you receive one and you have renewed.

### **ID Cards**

ID cards must be printed from your dashboard after you renew. The board office no longer prints and mails ID cards.

### **Test Approvals**

All test approvals issued by the board have been extended through December 31, 2020.





## Effective July 1, 2020

### Title 46 PROFESSIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS

#### Part XXV. Credentialed Social Workers | Chapter 5. Minimum Supervision Requirements

##### §503. LMSWs Seeking the LCSW Credential

A. Supervision for the LCSW license can begin after the MSW obtains LMSW. Supervision shall be documented on the forms provided by the board.

B. Supervision for the LCSW license is conducted by a board-approved clinical supervisor (BACS). LMSWs may obtain a list of BACS from the board's website or office.

C. The supervision contract shall be completed by the supervisor, the supervisee, and the agency supervisor and shall be submitted to the Board office by the supervisee within 60 days of the first supervision session. The employment verification shall be completed by the employer and shall be submitted by the supervisee along with the supervision contract. Failure to do so shall result in supervision being issued from the date that is 60 days from the date received. A new supervision contract shall be submitted by the supervisee within 60 days of the change when the supervisee changes employment, changes supervisor and/or there is a change in the agency supervisor. If there is a change in employment, the supervisee must also submit a new employment verification. The board office will email the supervisee and supervisor a notice confirming receipt of the supervision contract and the beginning date of supervision, within 60 days of receipt of the contract.

D. LMSWs seeking the LCSW credential must complete a minimum of 5,760 hours of postgraduate social work practice and at least 3,840 hours of that postgraduate social work practice must be under the supervision of a board approved clinical supervisor (BACS).

E. During the 3,840 hours of supervised practice, 96 hours of face-to-face supervision must occur between the supervisor and supervisee. Supervisory meetings must last no fewer than 30 minutes and no longer than 2 hours. In no case should more than 80 hours of practice occur without a supervisory meeting. Supervision credit shall not be issued for the time-period that this requirement is not met.

F. One-half (48 hours maximum) of the supervision requirement may be met through group supervision, occurring in increments of no more than two hours per group. No more than five supervisees may participate in a supervision group. In some cases, it may be beneficial to increase the number of group supervision hours. To obtain approval for up to 72 hours of group supervision, the supervisor must submit a written request to the board indicating the rationale for the increase. The board shall consider the request at a regularly scheduled board meeting and notify the supervisor of its decision within 30 business days.

G. School social workers shall count hours of postgraduate social work practice and supervision that occurs when they are employed in a social work position.

H. Occasionally, a need may arise for supervision to occur using electronic communication rather than on a face-to-face basis. The board may consider alternatives to face-to-face supervision if the applicant can demonstrate an undue burden due to hardship, disability or travel time. All situations of remoted supervision must be approved by the board. To receive approval, the supervisee should submit a written request containing specific details to the board.

*Continued on page 6...*

# LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS

*Continued from page 5...*

**Effective July 1, 2020 Title 46 PROFESSIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS**

***Part XXV. Credentialed Social Workers | Chapter 5. Minimum Supervision Requirements***

The board shall consider the request at a regularly scheduled Board meeting and notify the supervisor of its decision within 30 business days. If approved, the supervisor and supervisee agree to use secure technology that provided realtime, visual contact among the individuals involved, and adheres to the confidential nature of the supervisory process.

I. The supervisee and supervisor shall keep accurate records of both the dates of supervision sessions and the time spent in supervision, as well as brief information on the content of the supervisory session. Both the supervisor and supervisee will sign for each supervisory session. This information shall be provided on the form entitled record of supervision and should be maintained by the supervisee. Upon completion of supervision, this form shall be submitted to the board office. The board may also choose to randomly audit the record of supervision form to verify that supervision occurred in accordance with §503. If irregularities are found, supervision credit shall be reduced to reflect actual supervised time.

J. The supervisor shall also keep a supervision folder and it shall include the following:

1. copy of the supervision contract;
2. narrative of all supervisory sessions, including overview of cases discussed, significant decisions made; any ethical concerns; significant problems arising in supervision, and how they were resolved;
3. copies of memos and correspondence;
4. copy of evaluation of supervision form;
5. copies of the record of supervision.

K. The supervisor has a professional responsibility to honor his/her commitment to supervise responsibly, which includes covering content as indicated in the supervision contract, maintaining accurate records, making themselves available to the supervisee for required sessions and other consultations, and submitting forms on a timely basis. Should the supervisor fail to submit forms appropriately, and on a timely basis, the board reserves the right to withdraw the BACS designation from the supervisor.

L.1. The supervisee shall provide to the board office the following documents at the end of the supervisory period:

- a. evaluation of supervision;
  - b. record of supervision.
2. The board office does not confirm receipt of these forms. These forms will be reviewed once an application for LCSW is filed by the LMSW.

M. An evaluation of supervision form shall be submitted to the board office at the completion of that supervisor's supervisory period. Sometimes it is necessary for a supervisor to discontinue supervising a LMSW for licensure. When this occurs, no matter what length of time the supervisor actually supervised the supervisee, the supervisor must submit an Evaluation of Supervision form.

N. The professional experience verification record shall be submitted by the supervisee to the board office from each place of employment to verify dates employed and the hours of social work practice completed during the time employed. The professional experience verification record shall be completed by the employer(s).

O. If the LMSW receives supervision outside of the state of Louisiana, that supervision will be accepted if:

1. the supervisor has completed the authorized forms of the Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners; and
2. the supervisor is licensed at the time of supervision at a level substantially equivalent to a LCSW-BACS in the other state and submits the license verification of out of state supervisor form (available from board office). The board's publication, *Supervision for Professional Development and Public Protection: A Guide*, provides more information relative to supervision.

# LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS



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## **From The Chair**

I have come to understand that the act of seeking answers is more important than having answers. That is how I am getting through this moment.

Right now, I am perplexed by the shocking scene of a man in uniform with his knee on the neck of a fellow human being to the point of death. I cannot comprehend the hate one must feel to commit such an act. I am saddened by the pain and hopelessness that so many in our nation feel right now. I am angry that my grandchildren – two generations removed from the civil rights movement and the conflicts that formed me as a child and young adult – live in a nation that still struggles so mightily with race and equality. I am devastated that in the year 2020 – 52 years after Martin Luther King Jr was assassinated – that the black community still feels less than in their own communities.

My hope for each of you is that you find time to reflect on your own personal and professional journey. Your experiences are personal, your perspective is yours to share as you wish. I hope your personal reflection at this moment brings us to focus on tolerance, understanding and compassion for others.

In 1998, after years of imprisonment by the government that sought to lesson his value, Nelson Mandela said the following while dedicating a public hospital:

*“Whether you change the linen or stitch up the wounds, cook the food or dispense the medicines, it is in your hands to help build a public service worthy of all those who gave their lives for the dream of democracy.”*

As a colleague said to me, it is not enough to be upset about racism, bigotry, oppression and discrimination, we must raise our voices and be AGAINST it. Like you, I see it every day in my role as a social worker and I know it is our calling as a collective industry.

We are listeners. We know how to see and hear others. Our training has provided us these skills, our inherent values guide us to do so. Our instincts give us the strength to do so in this moment.

Our everyday work encourages family cohesiveness. A parent’s greatest wish is for their children to thrive and survive, feel comfortable in their own skin, to enjoy and freely interact with others without fear or violence. My wish for Louisiana’s families is that their social workers will seek answers to build safer and more equitable communities for all.

My journey continues, and I commit to support each of you on yours. It is in each of our hearts to help in public service worthy of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and all who have been subject to bias and racism or have been pushed to the shadows that prevents their participation in the dream of democracy.

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