



Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon  
Governor  
State of Missouri

Kathleen (Katie) Steele Danner, Division Director  
DIVISION OF PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION

Department of Insurance  
Financial Institutions  
and Professional Registration  
John M. Huff, Director

STATE COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL WORKERS  
3605 Missouri Boulevard  
P.O. Box 1335  
Jefferson City, MO 65102-1335  
573-751-0885  
573-526-3489 FAX  
800-735-2966 TTY Relay Missouri  
800-735-2466 Voice Relay Missouri  
lcsw@pr.mo.gov  
<http://pr.mo.gov/socialworkers.asp>

Tom Reichard  
Executive Director

## **Tentative Meeting Notice**

**September 22, 2016**

**8:00 a.m.**

**State Committee for Social Workers**

**Division of Professional Registration**

**3605 Missouri Blvd.**

**Jefferson City, MO 65109**

Notification of special needs as addressed by the American's with Disabilities Act should be forwarded to the State Committee for Social Workers, 3605 Missouri Blvd Jefferson City, MO 65102 or by calling (573) 751-0885 to ensure available accommodations. The text telephone for the hearing impaired is (800) 735-2966.

Except to the extent disclosure is otherwise required by law, the State Committee for Social Workers is authorized to close meetings, records and votes, to the extent they relate to the following: Chapter 610.021 subsections (1), (3), (5), (7), (13), (14) and Chapter 324.001.8 and 324.01.9 RSMo.

The State Committee for Social Workers may go into closed session at any time during the meeting. If the meeting is closed, the appropriate section will be announced to the public with the motion and vote recorded in open session minutes.

TENTATIVE AGENDA  
OPEN SESSION  
**September 22, 2016**  
1:00 p.m.

Division of Professional Registration  
3605 Missouri Blvd.  
Jefferson City, MO 65109

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Approval of Open Session Agenda
- IV. Introduction of Guests
- V. Approval of Minutes
  - o June 2-3, 2016
  - o June 27, 2016
- VI. Executive Director Report
  - o CE Audit for 2016
  - o Board Reports
  - o FARB Conference Jan 26 – 29, 2016
- VII. September Discussion
  - o Rules and Statues Review
  - o Annual Meeting of the Delegate Assembly
  - o Model Regulatory Standards for Technology & Social Work Practice - ASWB
  - o Miscellaneous
- VIII. Miscellaneous
  - o Patients who Travel out of State – Steve Franklin
  - o Miscellaneous
- IX. **CLOSED SESSION** - Closed session as per Section 610.021 Subsection (1) for the purpose of discussion of confidential or privileged communication between this agency and its attorney; Section 610.021 Subsection (14) and Section 324.001.8 for the purpose of discussing applicants for licensure. Closed under Sections 610.021 for the purpose of reviewing and approving the closed minutes of one or more previous meetings. Closed under Sections 610.021(14) and 324.001.8, RSMo, for the purpose of discussing investigative reports and/or complaints.
- X. Adjournment

Open Minutes  
June 2 & 3, 2016

State Committee for Social Workers  
Division of Professional Registration  
3605 Missouri Blvd.  
Jefferson City, MO 65109

**Members Present:**

Ellen Burkemper – Chairperson  
Terri Marty  
Sharon Sorrell  
Kathie Miller  
Justin Bennett  
Frances Klahr  
Rachell LaRose  
Tjitske Tubbergen-Maglio

**Staff Present:**

Tom Reichard – Executive Director  
Sharon Euler – Legal Counsel  
Tiffany Giesing – Processing Technician II  
Kim Snodgrass – Processing Technician II

**Guests Present:**

Steve Franklin  
Mary Long  
Leanne Peace  
Beth Witten  
Bill Nugent  
Kathie Abelgras  
Elizabeth Barker

**Call to Order – Ellen Burkemper, Chairperson**

The State Committee for Social Workers open session meeting was called to order by Ellen Burkemper, chairperson, at 10:00 a.m. on June 2, 2016 at the State Committee for Social Workers Division of Professional Registration, 3605 Missouri Blvd, Jefferson City, MO 65109.

**Approval of Agenda:**

A motion was made by T. Marty and seconded by K. Miller to approve the open session agenda. E. Burkemper, J. Bennett, T. Tubbergen-Maglio, R. LaRose and F. Klahr voted in favor of the motion.

**Approval of Minutes:**

A motion was made by T. Marty and seconded by J. Bennett to approve the open minutes from the March 24, 2016 meeting. E. Burkemper, F. Klahr, R. LaRose, K. Miller, S. Sorrell and T. Tubbergen-Maglio.

**Executive Director Report:**

**Board Totals:**

There are currently 67 Licensed Baccalaureate Social Workers, 1,527 Master Social Workers, 5,423 Clinical Social Workers and 765 under Supervision.

**Inactive:** 1 Advanced Macro Social Worker, 654 Clinical Social Workers, and 22 Master Social Workers.

**Continuing Education Audit:**

A motion was made by K. Miller and seconded by S. Sorrell to leave the existing Audit percentage the same. 10% audited post-renewal and 20% audit prior to renewing. E. Burkemper, R. LaRose, T. Marty, K. Miller, S. Sorrell and T. Tubbergen-Maglio.

**Multiple Supervision Sites (Tamitha Overly):**

Review of multiple supervision sites completed; Less than five supervisee's at this time with multiple settings. No changes to be made as of this date.

**CMS Regs Summary:**

Dialysis facility staff presented a summary of the CMS regs for the board to review. Asking, what level of license is needed in a dialysis setting? After reviewing the provided information the board informed the staff that they do not have statutory authority to answer advisory opinions. The staff would need to review the job description and verify the Social Workers are staying within their scope of allowed qualifications.

**Licensure Prep Course (Ellen Burkemper):**

Licensure Prep Course is still acceptable for CE's before and after licensing.

**Motion to Close:**

A motion was made by K. Miller and seconded by F. Klahr to move to closed session as per Section 610.021 subsection (1) for the purpose of discussion of confidential or privileged communication between this agency and its attorney; Section 610.21 Subsection (14) and Section 324.001.8 for the purpose of discussing applicants for licensure. Closed under sections 610.021 for the purpose of reviewing and approving the closed minutes of one or more previous meetings. Closed under Sections 610.021 (14) and 324.001.8, RSMo, for the purpose of discussing investigative reports and/or complaints. By roll call vote, E. Burkemper, T. Marty, J. Bennett, T. Tubbergen-Maglio, R. LaRose, K. Miller, S. Sorrell and F. Klahr voted in favor of the motion.

**Open Session:**

The Committee reconvened in open session at 4:55 p.m. on June 2, 2016.

**Adjournment:**

A motion was made by T. Marty and seconded by T. Tubbergen-Maglio to adjourn the meeting. J. Bennett, E. Burkemper, F. Klahr, R. LaRose, K. Miller and S. Sorrell voted in favor of the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m. on June 2, 2016.

**Call to Order – Ellen Burkemper, Chairperson:**

The State Committee for Social Workers' open session meeting was called to order by Ellen Burkemper, chairperson, at 8:40 a.m. on June 3, 2016 at the Division of Professional Registration, 3605 Missouri Blvd., Jefferson City, MO 65109.

**Approval of Agenda:**

A motion was made by T. Marty and seconded by F. Klahr to amended the agenda and add election of officers and discussion of rules. E. Burkemper, J. Bennett, T. Tubbergen-Maglio, R. LaRose and K. Miller voted in favor of the motion.

**Election of Officers:**

Motion made by K. Miller and seconded by S. Sorrell to nominate E. Burkemper as Chairperson and T. Marty as Secretary. J. Bennett, F. Klahr, R. LaRose, T. Marty and T. Tubbergen-Maglio voted in favor of the motion.

**State Committee for Social Worker's Meeting Dates:**

September 22, 2016 – Division of Professional Registration

December 15, 2016

March 16, 2017 – Division of Professional Registration

June 8 – 9, 2017 – Division of Professional Registration

**Sherman Weaver:**

Stephen Doerhoff and Jim McMullin appear in person. Sherman Weaver appears via phone.

Probation Violation hearing held.

**Brett Young:**

Mary Long appears. B. Young does not.

Probation Violation hearing held.

**Sharon Sorrell Briefing:**

ASWB Spring Education Meeting briefing.

### **September Discussion:**

Topics to be discussed in open session meeting for the September 22, 2016 State Committee for Social Workers meeting.

- Number of times to take the ASWB Exam's.
- Reciprocity requirements, out of state regulations, moving forward with adjoining states.
- Supervision changing to 4,000 hours and number of direct client contact hours.
- Telehealth.
- Continuing Education requirements.
- State exemption from licensure.
- LPC & MFT Supervision.
- Reciprocity vs. Restoration
- License's voiding out after a period of time.
- Retired license
- Define active license for reciprocity applications.
- Client complaint filing state.
- ASWB – Model Print
- Practice Act / Title Act
- Supervision Draft / Proposal
- Mobility, State to State
- Statutory Changes
- LPC & MFT Supervision
- Live Webinars considered face to face in rules
- Expired Licenses – 2 Years non-renewal to void out
- 552.040 & 632.484 Dealing with commitments
- Miscellaneous

September meeting to start with closed session and finish with open session, open session to begin at 1:00 p.m.

### **Motion to Close:**

A motion was made by E. Burkemper and seconded by K. Miller to move to closed session as per Section 610.021 Subsection (1) for the purpose of discussion of confidential or privileged communication between this agency and its attorney; Section 610.021 Subsection (14) and Section 324.001.8 for the purpose of discussing applicants for licensure. Closed under Sections 610.021 for the purpose of reviewing and approving the closed minutes of one or more previous meetings. Closed under Sections 610.021(14) and 324.001.8, RSMo, for the purpose of discussing investigative reports and/or complaints. By roll call vote, E. Burkemper, T. Marty, J. Bennett, T. Tubbergen-Maglio, R. LaRose, K. Miller, S. Sorrell and F. Klahr voted in favor of the motion.

**Open Minutes  
Phone Conference  
June 27, 2016**

**State Committee for Social Workers  
Division of Professional Registration  
3605 Missouri Blvd.  
Jefferson City, MO 65109**

**Members Present:**

Ellen Burkemper  
Terri Marty  
Sharon Sorrell  
Kathie Miller  
Justin Bennett  
Rachell LaRose  
Tjitske Tubbergen-Maglio

**Staff Present:**

Tom Reichard – Executive Director  
Sharon Euler – Legal Counsel  
Vicky Steen  
Tiffany Giesing

**Call to Order – Ellen Burkemper, Chairperson:**

The State Committee for Social Workers open session was called to order by Ellen Burkemper, chairperson, at 9:00 a.m. on June 27, 2016 via telephone conference at the Division of Professional Registration, State Committee for Social Workers, 3605 Missouri Blvd, Jefferson City, MO 65109.

**Approval of Agenda:**

A motion was made by K. Miller and seconded by J. Bennett to approve the open session agenda. E. Burkemper, T. Marty, S. LaRose and T. Tubbergen-Maglio voted in favor of the motion.

**Motion to Close:**

A motion was made by T. Marty and seconded by K. Miller to move to close session as per Section 610.021 Subsection (1) for the purpose of discussion of confidential or privileged communication between this agency and it's attorney; Section 610.021 Subsection (14) and Section 324.001.8 of the purpose of discussing applicants for licensure. Closed under Sections 610.021 for the purpose of reviewing and approving the closed minutes of one or more previous meetings. Closed under Sections 610.021 (14) and 324.001.8, RSMo, for the purpose of discussing investigative reports and/or complaints. By roll call vote, E. Burkemper, J. Bennett, T. Tubbergen-Maglio, R. LaRose and S. Sorrell voted in favor of the motion.

**Miscellaneous:**

Reminder of the September 22, 2016 meeting  
State proposal deadline

Items to be added to the September Agenda:

Statute changes or rules  
License expires  
Retired licensees  
Length to restore – 5 years, educational experience  
BSW and MSW required to be licensed  
Limit number of times to take the exam  
Out of state reciprocity  
Void out after 5 years of expiration

**Closed Meeting**

A motion was made by T. Marty and seconded by K. Miller to move to closed session as per Section 610.021 Subsection (1) for the purpose of discussion of confidential or privileged communication between this agency and its attorney; Section 610.021 Subsection (14) and Section 324.001.8 for the purpose of discussing applicants for licensure. Closed under Sections 610.021 for the purpose of reviewing and approving the closed minutes of one or more previous meetings. Closed under Sections 610.021(14) and 324.001.8, RSMo, for the purpose of discussing investigative reports and/or complaints. By roll call vote, E. Burkemper, J. Bennett, T. Tubbergen-Maglio, R. LaRose and S. Sorrell voted in favor of the motion.



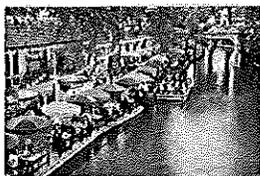
[Sign In](#) | [Create Account](#) | [Cart](#)

**Federation of Associations of Regulatory Boards**

[Home](#) | [About Us](#) | [Membership](#) | [Conferences](#) | [Programs](#) | [Resources](#)

Share this page

**2017 FARB Forum San Antonio, TX**



**Welcome to the 2017 FARB Forum Registration Page!**

FARB's 41st Annual FARB Forum will be January 26-29, 2017 at the Omni La Mansión del Rio.

A picturesque city in the heart of Texas, San Antonio, home to the legendary Alamo and world famous River Walk, hosts a vibrant mix of culture, cuisine, legendary architecture and moving history. The city's

heritage and traditions are rich, as are its modern pleasures. With a cosmopolitan blend of top-notch golf courses, remarkable dining and nightlife options, art galleries, spas, theme parks and shopping, there's no shortage of authentic experiences.

**Sign In**

Keep me signed in

[I don't know my username or password](#)  
[Create a new account](#)

**2017 FARB Forum Agenda**

**Thursday, January 26, 2:00 pm – 7:00 pm**  
*Early Registration*

**Thursday, January 26, 3:00 pm – 7:30 pm – OPTIONAL SESSION**  
*Comprehensive Regulatory Training*

**Friday, January 27, 8:30 am – 5:00 pm**  
*Session Topics:*  
 Data for Decision Making  
 FARB Survey Results  
 Sunset Review and Annual Legislative Reports  
 Award Winning Boards  
 A Legislative Mandate for Board Collaboration  
 Board Websites  
 Regulation in the News  
 Regulatory Mosh Pit

**Friday, January 27, 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm**  
*FARB Reception*

**Saturday, January 28, 8:30 am – 12:15 pm**  
*Session Topics:*  
 Examinations What State Board need to know  
 New Legislation Affecting the Regulatory Community  
 Concurrent Sessions: (pick one)  
     Board Member Focus  
     Board Staff Focus  
     Legal Counsel Focus  
     Association Level Staff Focus  
 Top Regulatory Cases

**Sunday, January 29, 8:30 am – 11:30 am**  
*Session Topics:*  
 Technology in Investigations  
 Perspectives of a Complainant and a Disciplined Licensee  
 Reinstatement Petitions  
 Administrative Expungement  
 For a complete agenda and detailed conference information, download our [conference brochure](#).

### Continuing Education

FARB is an approved Illinois Minimum Continuing Legal Education (CLE) course provider. We anticipate attendees will earn 11.25 CLE credit hours at the Forum. Attendees can anticipate an additional 4 hours of CLE credit if attending the optional CRT course. Other professions may be able to use FARB courses as continuing education. Attendees must submit required information to their appropriate jurisdictions as necessary.

### Reservations

FARB has reserved a block of rooms at the Omni La Mansión del Rio specifically for Forum attendees. Please make your reservations early, as only a limited number of hotel rooms will be available until the cut-off date of **Wednesday, January 4, 2017**, or until the group block is sold out, whichever comes first. *Hotel reservations made after this date are subject to availability and rate increase.*

*Attendees are responsible for securing their own hotel reservations.* Reservations may be made by contacting the Omni La Mansión del Rio directly:

Omni La Mansión del Rio  
112 College St.  
San Antonio, TX 78205  
Reservations: 1-800-THE-OMNI or 210-518-1000

[Click here](#) to make your reservation online link

Please refer to the FARB group when making your reservations to ensure you get the reduced room rate of \$199.00 per night plus tax.

### Transportation

Attendees are responsible for securing their own shuttle reservations. SuperShuttle is offering a \$17 one-way reduced fare and \$30 round trip fare. Discount may only be used for online reservations only. [Click here](#) to make your reservation.

### Scavenger Hunt

Join FARB for an amazing scavenger hunt adventure that will start in the center of this historic city and will take you back in time to explore the grounds of the Alamo. The adventure will then guide you down along the River Walk and through the streets to enjoy the modern-day sights and sounds of the city while finding historic and unique hidden gems. The scavenger hunt will be Saturday, January 28, 2017 at 1:30 PM and is only \$15 per person. Please sign up for the scavenger hunt by Wednesday, January 25, 2017.

Guests are welcome. [Click here](#) to purchase the scavenger hunt.

*Please note: You must be logged in to register. If you are registering someone else you must be logged into the attendee's account. Please contact FARB if you need assistance with your FARB account.*

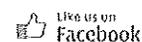
When 1/26/2017 - 1/29/2017

---

#### Contact Us

The Federation of Associations of Regulatory Boards  
1466 Techny Road  
Northbrook, Illinois 60062  
(847) 559-3272  
[FARB@FARB.org](mailto:FARB@FARB.org)

#### Connect With Us



## Giesing, Tiffany

---

**From:** Reichard, Tom  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 08, 2016 12:29 PM  
**To:** Giesing, Tiffany  
**Subject:** FW: Registration is now open!

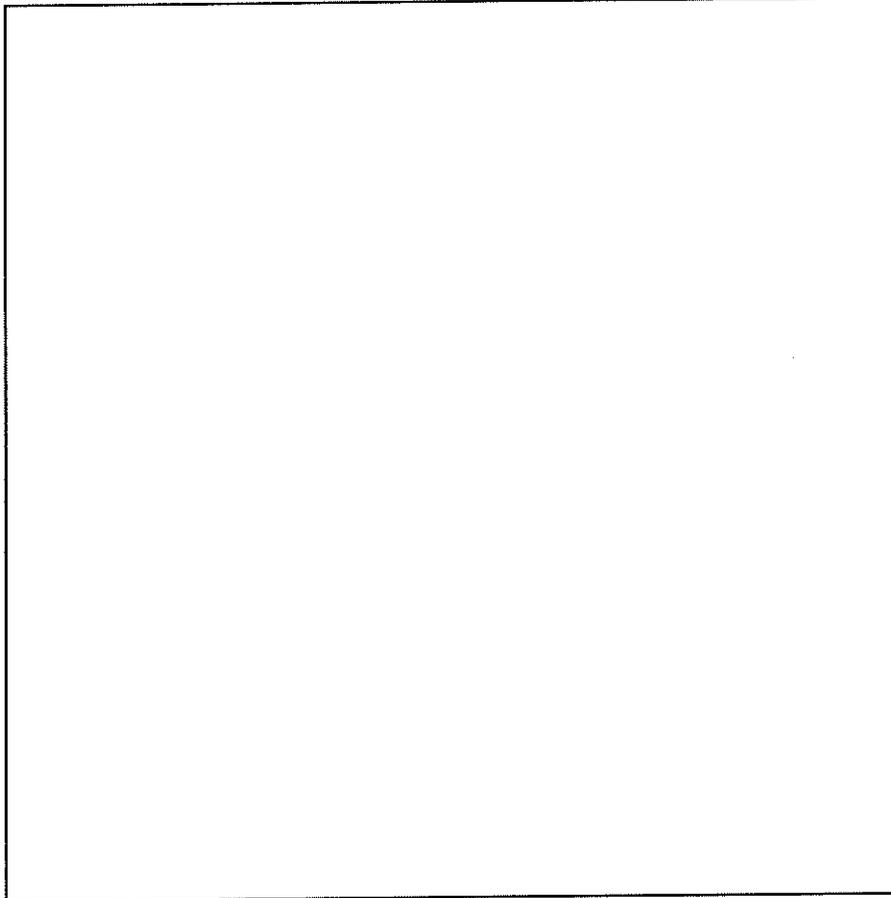
Please place on the agenda.

Tom Reichard  
Executive Director  
State Committee for Social Workers  
State Committee of Dietitians  
Office of Endowed Care Cemeteries  
Interior Design Council  
Missouri Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions & Professional Registration  
[tom.reichard@pr.mo.gov](mailto:tom.reichard@pr.mo.gov)

---

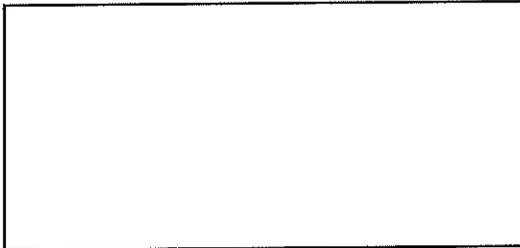
**From:** Karen Francisco, CMMM, MHA, Conference & Events Manager [mailto:dsheehan@aswb.ccsend.com] **On Behalf Of** Karen Francisco, CMMM, MHA, Conference & Events Manager  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 08, 2016 11:42 AM  
**To:** Reichard, Tom  
**Subject:** Registration is now open!

Register NOW for the 2016 Delegate Assembly!



**Register now!**

ASWB will be holding the 2016  
Annual Meeting of the Delegate  
Assembly in San Diego,  
California, November 17-19, 2016.



US Grant Hotel  
326 Broadway  
San Diego, CA 92101

**Registration deadline is October 14, 2016.**

---

**Funded travel**

For the 2016 Annual Meeting of the Delegate Assembly, ASWB is funding travel, lodging, and meals for:

- Delegates (ONE designated representative from each ASWB member jurisdiction)
- Members of the ASWB Board of Directors
- Chairs of ASWB Committees
- Election candidates
- Award recipients
- Members of the ASWB Nominating Committee

---

## Preconference Sessions, Thursday, November 17

### **Administrators Forum**

Twice a year, ASWB hosts the Administrators Forum, a daylong meeting of administrators, registrars, and staff members of ASWB member boards. The agenda varies with each meeting, but the forum provides a great opportunity for social work regulatory staff to learn from their colleagues.

### **Board Member Exchange**

Added in 2015, this is a daylong meeting of board members from all jurisdictions. This gathering, facilitated by two board members of ASWB member boards, gives social work regulators a chance to discuss common concerns in social work regulation and learn from the expertise of other social work regulators.

---

## Find out more and plan to attend:

[Draft agenda](#)

[Online registration](#)

[Funding application for social work regulatory administrators and registrars](#)

Hope to see you in San Diego!

STAY CONNECTED

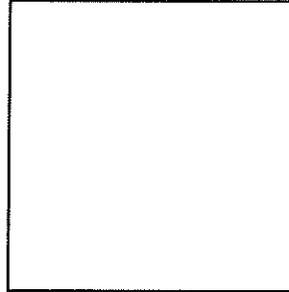


Association of Social Work Boards, 400 Southridge Parkway,  
Suite B, Culpeper, VA 22701

[SafeUnsubscribe™ tom.reichard@pr.mo.gov](#)

[Forward this email](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [About our service provider](#)

Sent by [kfrancisco@aswb.org](mailto:kfrancisco@aswb.org) in collaboration with



Try it free today

# model regulatory standards for technology and social work practice

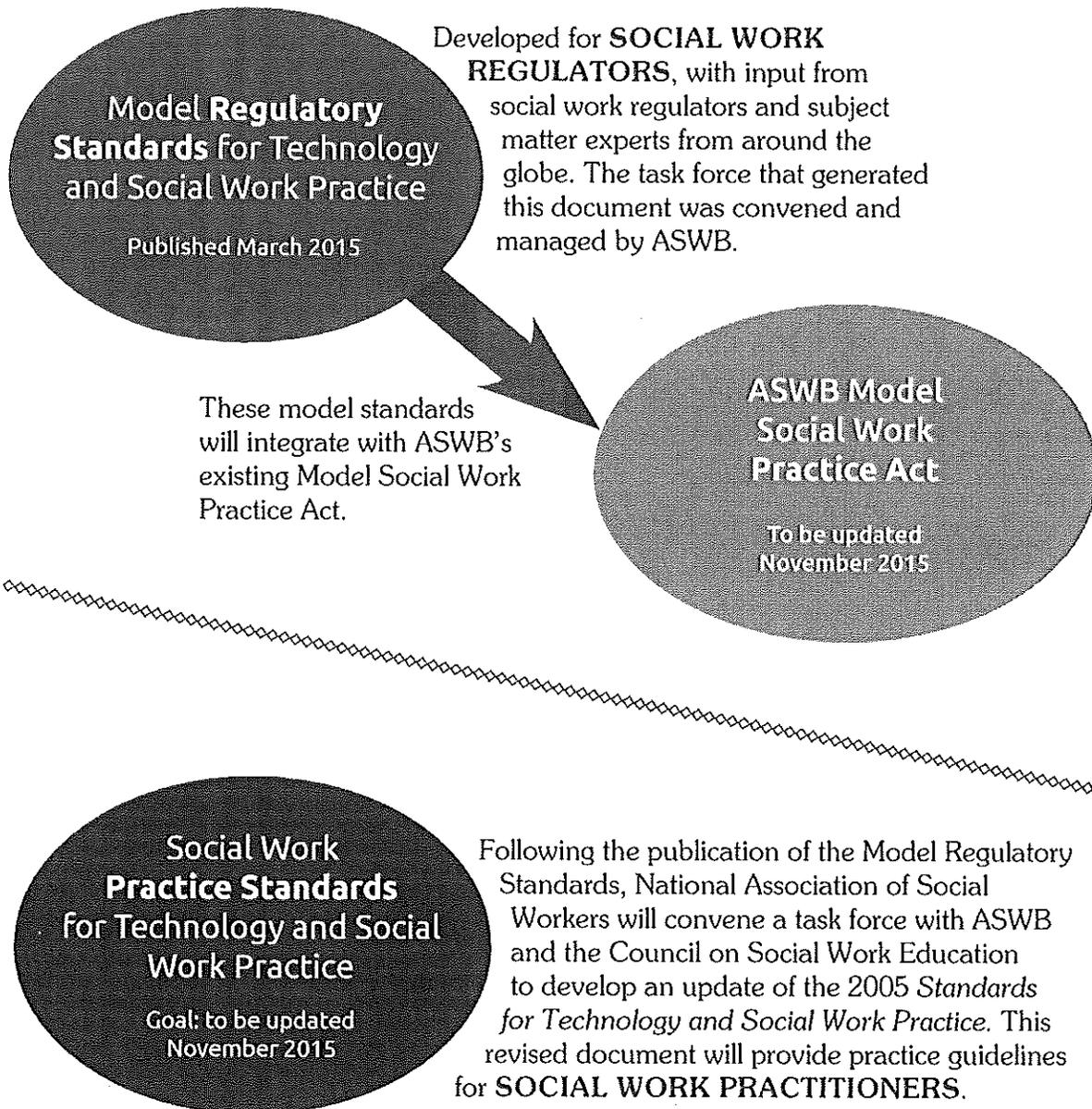
ASWB International Technology Task Force, 2013-2014

a s s o c i a t i o n o f s o c i a l w o r k b o a r d s

visit [www.aswb.org](http://www.aswb.org) to find the most recent edition of this document

# Technology and Social Work Practice: A Collaborative Approach

An issue as complex as the use of technology in social work practice requires consideration from several points of view. This document is the first step in a series of standards that will be developed to address the concerns and questions of social work regulators and social work practitioners. These standards will be developed collaboratively with stakeholders from throughout the social work community.





March 2, 2015

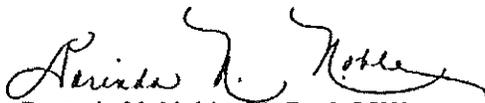
The introduction of technology into social work practice has presented unprecedented opportunity for social workers to practice across jurisdictional boundaries—giving them mobility in ways not imagined before. This in turn has created challenges for social work regulators, whose job it is to ensure no harm comes to the public.

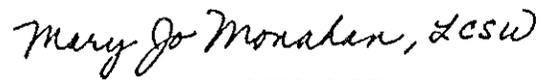
ASWB and its Board of Directors would like to thank the members of the ASWB International Technology Task Force and its chair, Frederic Reamer, Ph.D., for their work in developing these **Model Regulatory Standards for Technology and Social Work Practice**. Their commitment to this project has resulted in a publication that will guide regulators, educators, and practitioners as they consider how to embrace technology and integrate its use into social work practice.

The members of the task force were appointed by the ASWB Board of Directors in April 2013. The first organizing virtual meeting was held on July 8, 2013, followed by four additional virtual meetings through August 2014 to complete work on these model regulatory standards. Dr. Reamer presented the draft document to the Delegate Assembly at its meeting in Boise, Idaho, on Friday, November 14, 2014. A comment period open to regulators followed. Comments were reviewed and integrated by the task force as the final draft was completed. The ASWB Board of Directors adopted the final version of this publication at its January 22, 2015, meeting.

These standards offer guidance as regulators think through amending rules and regulations related to the growing and evolving practice of providing electronic social work services. An electronic version will be maintained on the ASWB website, [www.aswb.org](http://www.aswb.org). In addition, the ASWB Regulation and Standards Committee will use this document as guidance in amending sections of the ASWB Model Social Work Practice Act related to electronic social work practice.

As noted in the **Preamble**, the intended audience for this document is the social work regulatory community, specifically ASWB members and governmental regulatory bodies responsible for ensuring the safe, competent, and ethical practice of social workers using digital and other electronic technology. The model regulatory standards will also help shape practice standards. ASWB will be partnering with the National Association of Social Workers and the Council on Social Work Education to update the 2005 Technology Practice Standards. We look forward to this collaboration to develop practice standards that will serve as a guide for social workers who choose to provide electronic social work services.

  
Dorinda N. Noble, Ph.D., LCSW  
ASWB President

  
Mary Jo Monahan, MSW, LCSW  
ASWB Chief Executive Officer

## **Contributors**

**Chair:** Frederic Reamer, Ph.D., Professor, School of Social Work, Rhode Island College

### **Association of Social Work Boards**

M. Jenise Comer, MSW, LCSW, ACSW, Secretary, ASWB Board of Directors; Board liaison, Regulation and Standards Committee

Dwight Hymans, MSW, LCSW, Executive Vice President

Mary Jo Monahan, MSW, LCSW, Chief Executive Officer

Steven W. Pharris, MSW, J.D., LMSW-TN, LCSW-AR, Tennessee Board of Social Workers; ASWB Delegate; Regulation and Standards Committee member

Melissa Ryder, Executive Services Manager

### **Canadian Association of Social Workers**

Annette Johns, MSW, RSW, Associate Director of Policy and Practice, Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Social Workers (NLASW)

### **Canadian Council of Social Work Regulators**

Rachel Birnbaum, Ph.D., RSW, LL.M., Past President (2012-2014)

### **Council on Social Work Education**

Paul Freddolino, Ph.D., Professor, Michigan State University

Jo Ann Regan, Ph.D., MSW, Director, Office of Social Work Accreditation

### **Ireland**

Gloria Kirwan, Assistant Professor of Social Work, Trinity College Dublin

### **National Association of Social Workers**

Mirean Coleman, MSW, LICSW, CT, Senior Practice Associate, Division of Social Work Practice

Dawn Hobdy, MSW, Director, Office of Ethics and Professional Review

### **New Zealand Social Workers Registration Board**

Sean McKinley, Chief Executive/Registrar, Social Workers Registration Board

### **Wales**

Rhian Huws Williams, Chief Executive, Care Council for Wales

## **Contents**

Preamble.....	1
Model Regulatory Standards .....	3
Definitions.....	3
Section I. Practitioner Competence and Compliance with Ethical Standards.....	4
Section II. Informed Consent.....	4
Section III. Privacy and Confidentiality.....	6
Section IV. Boundaries, Dual Relationships, and Conflicts of Interest .....	7
Section V. Records and Documentation.....	8
Section VI. Collegial Relationships.....	8
Section VII. Electronic Practice Across Jurisdictional Boundaries.....	9
Sources .....	10



# Model Regulatory Standards for Technology and Social Work Practice

## *Preamble*

Advances in digital and other electronic technology used to provide information to the public, deliver services, store and access information, and communicate with and about **clients**\*, colleagues, and others have transformed the nature of social work practice. Social workers' use of digital and other technology has the potential to assist people in need. It is important for social workers to enhance **clients**' access to digital and other electronic technology that may assist them and to have a thorough understanding of the potential benefits and risks associated with the use of this technology.

For purposes of these standards, "digital and other electronic technology" refers to the use of computers (including the Internet, social media, online chat, text, and email) and other electronic means (such as smartphones, landline telephones, and video technology) to (a) provide information to the public, (b) deliver services to **clients**, (c) communicate with **clients**, (d) manage confidential information and case records, (e) store and access information about **clients**, and (f) arrange payment for professional services. Collectively, this use shall be referred to throughout this document as "**electronic social work services**."

The intended audience for this document is the social work regulatory community, specifically ASWB members and **governmental regulatory bodies** responsible for ensuring the safe, competent, and ethical practice of social workers using digital and other electronic technology. In their efforts to protect the public, **governmental regulatory bodies** have an obligation to interpret statutes and, when necessary, adopt rules and regulations that address social workers' use of this technology. This document is intended to serve as guidance as regulators think through amending rules and regulations related to the growing and evolving practice of providing **electronic social work services**.

This document is not intended to set forth legal standards enforceable by law. **Jurisdictions** will do that through the adoption of rules and regulations. In addition, the ASWB Regulation and Standards Committee will use this document as guidance in amending sections of the ASWB Model Social Work Practice Act related to electronic social work practice.

Since its formal inauguration in the late 19th century, the social work profession has developed a rich set of ethical standards governing practitioners and professional practice. Over time, these ethical standards have become comprehensive guides to social workers' management of complex issues pertaining to their ethical responsibilities to **clients**, to colleagues, in practice settings, to the social work profession, and to the broader society. The proliferation of social workers' use of digital and other electronic technology has created new ethical challenges.

The standards of care that have historically protected social work **clients** in the context of **in-person** relationships apply to **electronic social work services**. Social workers who choose to use

---

\*All terms in the Definitions section appear in bold/italic type.

digital and other electronic technology in their professional capacity have an obligation to do so in a way that:

- honors their commitment to **client** well-being and to social work's commitment to assist people in need, including those who have limited access to digital and other electronic technology
- adheres to prevailing ethical standards in social work

ASWB will partner with the National Association of Social Workers and the Council on Social Work Education to update the 2005 Technology Practice Standards. These practice standards will serve as a guide for social workers who choose to provide **electronic social work services**.

## Model Regulatory Standards

Social work practice and related governmental regulatory standards vary significantly within North America and internationally. Further, ethical standards and norms vary among diverse cultural groups served by social workers. Standards adopted by **governmental regulatory bodies** related to **electronic social work services** should take into consideration international and other cultural differences. Social workers who use digital or other electronic technology to provide information to the public, deliver services to **clients**, communicate with and about **clients**, manage confidential information and case records, and store and access information about **clients** shall adhere to standards pertaining to informed consent; privacy and confidentiality; boundaries, dual relationships, and conflicts of interest; practitioner competence; records and documentation; and collegial relationships.

## Definitions

*Terms defined here appear in bold/italic type throughout the document.*

**Client** means the individual, couple, family, group, organization, or community that seeks or receives social work services from an individual social worker or organization. **Client** status is not dependent on billing or payment of fees for such services.

**Electronic social work services** mean the use of computers (including the Internet, social media, online chat, text, and email) and other electronic means (such as smartphones, landline telephones, and video technology) to (a) provide information to the public, (b) deliver social work services to **clients**, (c) communicate with **clients**, (d) manage confidential information and case records, (e) store and access information about **clients**, and (f) arrange payment for professional services.

**Governmental regulatory body/bodies** means the governing body/bodies regulating social work practice in a state, territory, or province

**In-person** refers to interactions in which the social worker and the **client** are in the same physical space and does not include interactions that may occur through the use of technology.

**Jurisdiction** or **jurisdictional** refers to the area governed by a state, territorial, or provincial government.

**Regulated** means licensure, registration, certification or professional oversight by a **governmental regulatory body**.

**Remote** refers to the provision of a service that is received at a different site from where the social worker is physically located. **Remote** includes no consideration related to distance and may refer to a site that is near to or far from the social worker.

## **Section I. Practitioner Competence and Compliance with Ethical Standards**

Social workers who choose to provide **electronic social work services** shall:

- 1.01. Do so only after engaging in appropriate education, study, training, consultation, and supervision from people who are competent in the use of this technology to provide social work services.
- 1.02. Use professional judgment, critically examine, and keep current with emerging knowledge related to the delivery of **electronic social work services**. Social workers shall review relevant professional literature and participate in continuing education related to electronic social work practice. When examining research evidence, social workers shall give precedence to research that meets prevailing professional methodological and ethical standards.
- 1.03. When delivering services, be aware of cultural differences among **clients** and in **clients'** use of digital and other electronic technology. Social workers shall assess cultural, environmental, and linguistic issues that may affect the delivery of services.
- 1.04. Be aware of unique communication challenges associated with **electronic social work services** (e.g., the absence of visual cues and limitations associated with the use of online written communication). Social workers shall establish reasonable strategies to address these issues (e.g., using interpretive gestures and emotions, enhancing **clients'** ability to communicate online or with other technology).
- 1.05. Assess whether **clients'** needs can be met using **electronic social work services** and, when necessary, refer **clients** to another professional.
- 1.06. Refer **clients** to another professional if **clients** prefer not to receive **electronic social work services**.
- 1.07. Seek consultation, when necessary, from colleagues with relevant expertise.
- 1.08. Have specialized skills, knowledge, and education consistent with current standards of practice when providing supervision and consultation to colleagues who provide **electronic social work services**.
- 1.09. Comply with the regulations governing the use of this technology both in the **jurisdiction** in which they are **regulated** and in the **jurisdiction** in which the **client** is located.
- 1.10. Review professionally relevant information about themselves that appears on websites and in other publicly available resources to ensure accuracy. Social workers shall take reasonable steps to correct any inaccuracies.

## **Section II. Informed Consent**

Social workers who choose to provide **electronic social work services** shall:

- 2.01. Obtain the informed consent of the individuals using their services during the initial screening or interview and prior to initiating services. Social workers shall assess **clients'** capacity to provide informed consent.

2.02. Develop policies and inform **clients** about the nature of available services, potential benefits and risks, alternative ways of receiving assistance, fees, involvement of and sharing information with third parties, and limits of confidentiality. Examples of potential benefits are immediate access to services, convenient scheduling, privacy, and reduced or eliminated transportation barriers. Examples of potential risks are the lack of visual and auditory cues, delayed responses, the need for crisis services, confidentiality breaches, and technological failures.

2.03 Provide information in a manner that is understandable and culturally appropriate for the **client**. **Clients** shall be given sufficient opportunity to ask questions and receive answers about **electronic social work services**. Social workers shall revisit relevant informed consent issues as needed during the course of the professional-**client** relationship. Social workers' efforts to provide this information to **clients** shall be documented in the **client** record.

2.04. Take reasonable steps to verify the identity and location of **clients** (e.g., requesting scanned copies of government-issued identification). When verification of a **client's** identity is not required or feasible (e.g., when social workers provide crisis services **remotely**), social workers shall inform **clients** of the limitations of the services that can be provided.

2.05. Develop and disclose to **clients** policies on the use of Internet-based search engines to gather information about **clients**.

2.06. Inform the **client**, and document in the **client** record, the use of Internet-based search engines to gather information about the **client**.

2.07. Conduct an initial screening at the point of the **client's** first contact and assess the **client's** suitability and capacity for online and **remote** services. Social workers shall consider the **client's** intellectual, emotional, and physical ability to use digital and other electronic technology to receive services and the **client's** ability to understand the potential risks and limitations of such services.

2.08 Use professional judgment to determine whether an initial **in-person**, videoconference, or telephone consultation is warranted before undertaking **electronic social work services**. Social workers shall continually assess their **clients'** suitability for **electronic social work services** during the course of the professional relationship. Social workers' assessment shall consider a **client's**:

- *age*. Social workers shall consider the legal age of consent in the **client's** place of residence.
- *clinical and diagnostic issues*. Social workers shall assess clinical and diagnostic concerns that may preclude a **client** from being appropriate for **electronic social work services**.
- *technological skills*. Social workers shall assess a **client's** experience with and ability to use the digital and other electronic technology that the social worker uses to deliver **electronic social work services**.
- *disabilities*. Social workers shall ensure that a **client** with disabilities is able to benefit from **electronic social work services**.
- *language skills and literacy*. Social workers shall assess a **client's** ability to communicate, including language abilities, language barriers, and reading and comprehension ability.

- *cultural issues.* Social workers shall assess whether the use of **electronic social work services** is inclusive and consistent with a **client's** cultural values and norms.
- *safety issues.* Social workers shall assess the extent to which a **client** has access to family, friends, and social supports; community resources; and emergency services.

2.09. When developing a professional website for the general public, **clients**, and professionals, provide clear and accessible information about services. This information shall include:

- *professional profile and contact information.* Social workers shall display their contact information, including email address, business postal address, and telephone number. Social workers shall provide accurate information about their educational degrees. Their professional licenses and/or certifications shall be conspicuously displayed.
- *terms of use, privacy policy, and informed consent.* Social workers shall provide **clients** with either a webpage or a downloadable document that includes the terms of use, privacy policy, and informed consent information, how credit card information and **client** records are stored, retained, shared, and used.
- *crisis intervention.* Social workers shall provide clear and explicit guidelines to assist **clients** who require crisis services at times when the social worker is unavailable.
- *risks of interruption in services.* Social workers shall develop a protocol to manage interruption of services due to technological failure. Social workers shall inform **clients** about how to proceed if there are technological difficulties during a session or other efforts to communicate (e.g., by video, live online chat, email, or text).
- *consumer information.* Social workers shall inform each **client** of their license or registration number, **governmental regulatory body's** name, address, telephone number, email address, and website for reporting alleged violations of law or rule that govern the practice of social work within the **jurisdiction** in which the social worker is located. Social workers shall inform **clients** of their right to report alleged violations to the **governmental regulatory body** that governs social work practice in the **jurisdiction** where the **client** is located.

### **Section III. Privacy and Confidentiality**

Social workers who choose to provide **electronic social work services** shall:

3.01. Inform **clients** about risks associated with disclosure of confidential information on the Internet, social media sites, text-messaging sites, and videoconferencing sites, and the potential consequences.

3.02. Use proper safeguards, including encryption, when sharing confidential information using digital or other electronic technology. Social workers shall protect **clients'** stored confidential information through the use of proper safeguards, including secure firewalls, encryption software, and password protection.

3.03. Adhere to statutes and regulations regarding the secure use of digital and other electronic technology both within their **jurisdictions** and within the **jurisdiction** where the **client** is located.

3.04. Obtain **client** consent when using electronic search engines to gather information about the **client**, with the exception of emergency circumstances when such search may provide information to help protect the **client** or other parties who may be at risk.

3.05. Develop confidentiality agreements for **clients**, including a summary of confidentiality exceptions. Social workers shall document a **client's** consent and acknowledgment of the confidentiality agreement in the **client** record.

3.06. Inform **clients** that **clients** are not permitted to disclose or post digital or other electronic communications from social workers or other recipients of services without proper consent.

3.07. Inform family, couple, and group **clients** that the social worker cannot guarantee that all participants will honor such agreements.

3.08. Protect the confidentiality of all information obtained by, or stored using, digital and other electronic technology except when disclosure is necessary to prevent serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm to a **client** or other identifiable person, or to comply with statutes, regulations, and court orders.

3.09. Inform **clients** that third-party services that feature text messaging or other direct electronic messaging may provide limited security and protection of confidential information. Social workers shall inform **clients** as soon as possible about secure ways to contact them.

3.10. Take steps to ensure that confidential digital communications are protected. Social workers shall use proper safeguards, including encryption, when using digital communications such as email communications, online posts, online chat sessions, mobile communication, and text communications. Social workers shall develop and disclose policies and procedures for notifying **clients** as soon as possible of any breach of confidential information.

#### ***Section IV. Boundaries, Dual Relationships, and Conflicts of Interest***

Social workers who choose to provide **electronic social work services** shall:

4.01. Avoid developing inappropriate dual or multiple relationships with **clients**.

4.02. Avoid perceived or actual conflicts of interest.

4.03. Communicate with **clients** using digital and other electronic technology (such as social networking sites, online chat, email, text messages, and video) only for professional or treatment-related purposes and only with **client** consent.

4.04. Discuss with **clients** the social workers' policies concerning digital and other electronic communication between scheduled appointments, during emergencies and social workers' vacations, and after normal working hours.

4.05. Take reasonable steps to prevent **client** access to social workers' personal social networking sites to avoid boundary confusion and inappropriate dual relationships. Social workers shall maintain separate professional and personal social media and websites in order to establish clear boundaries and to avoid inappropriate dual relationships.

- 4.06. Avoid posting personal information on professional websites, blogs, or other forms of social media that might create boundary confusion and inappropriate dual relationships.
- 4.07. Avoid posting any identifying or confidential information about **clients** on professional websites, blogs, or other forms of social media.
- 4.08. Be aware that cultural factors may influence the likelihood of discovering shared friend networks on websites, blogs, and other forms of social media. Social workers shall be aware that shared membership in cultural groups based on race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, religion, addiction recovery, and other personal interests may create boundary confusion and inappropriate dual relationships. Social workers shall avoid conflicts of interest and inappropriate dual relationships based on their personal interests and online presence.
- 4.09. Refrain from soliciting digital or online testimonials from **clients** or former **clients** who, because of their particular circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence.
- 4.10. Refrain from accepting “friend” or contact or blog response requests from **clients** on social networking sites. Exceptions may be made when such contact is an explicit component of a treatment or service-delivery model and meets prevailing standards regarding the use of digital technology to serve **clients**.
- 4.11. When avoidable, refrain from providing *electronic social work services* to a person with whom a social worker has had a personal relationship.
- 4.12. When providing supervision or consultation **remotely** to individuals, be knowledgeable about the unique issues telecommunication technologies pose for supervision or consultation.
- 4.13. When providing supervision **remotely**, adhere to the regulatory requirements of the **jurisdiction** where the supervised practitioner is **regulated**.

### **Section V. Records and Documentation**

Social workers who choose to provide *electronic social work services* shall:

- 5.01. Develop policies regarding sharing, retention, and storage of digital and other electronic communications and records and inform **clients** of these policies.
- 5.02. Document all contacts with and services provided to **clients** and inform **clients** that digital and electronic communications will be included in **client** records.
- 5.03. Inform **clients** about the mechanisms used to secure and back up records (such as hard drive, external drive, third-party server), and the length of time records will be stored before being destroyed.
- 5.04. Inform **clients** that they have a right to information about the content of their records in accord with prevailing ethical and legal standards.

### **Section VI. Collegial Relationships**

Social workers who choose to provide *electronic social work services* shall:

- 6.01. Abide by professional values and ethical standards when communicating with and about colleagues, avoiding cyberbullying, harassment, or making derogatory or defamatory comments.
- 6.02. Not disclose private, confidential, or sensitive information about the work or personal life of any colleague without consent, including messages, photographs, videos, or any other material that could invade or compromise a colleague's privacy.
- 6.03. Take reasonable steps to correct or remove any inaccurate or offensive information they have posted or transmitted about a colleague using digital or other electronic technology.
- 6.04. Not use digital or other electronic technology to present the work of others as their own. Social workers shall acknowledge the work of and the contributions made by others.
- 6.05. Take appropriate action if they believe that a colleague who provides **electronic social work services** is behaving unethically, is not using safeguards such as firewalls or encryption, or is allowing unauthorized access to digitally or electronically stored information. Such action may include discussing their concerns with the colleague when feasible and when such discussion is likely to produce a resolution. If there is no resolution, social workers shall report through appropriate formal channels established by employers, agencies, professional organizations, and **governmental regulatory bodies**.
- 6.06. Use professional judgment and take steps to discourage, prevent, expose, and correct any efforts by colleagues to knowingly produce, possess, download, or transmit illicit or illegal content or images in digital or electronic format.

### **Section VII. Electronic Practice Across Jurisdictional Boundaries**

Social workers who choose to provide *electronic social work services* shall:

- 7.01 Comply with the laws and regulations that govern **electronic social work services** within the **jurisdictions** in which the social worker is located and in which the **client** is located.

## Sources

- American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. (2001). *AAMFT code of ethics*. Retrieved from [http://www.aamft.org/resources/lrm\\_plan/ethics/ethicscode2001.asp](http://www.aamft.org/resources/lrm_plan/ethics/ethicscode2001.asp)
- American Counseling Association. (2014). *ACA code of ethics*. Retrieved from <http://www.counseling.org/docs/ethics/2014-aca-code-of-ethics.pdf?sfvrsn=4>
- American Psychological Association. (2010). *Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct*. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx>
- American Telemedicine Association. (2013). *Practice guidelines for video-based online mental health services*. Retrieved from <http://www.americantelemed.org/docs/default-source/standards/practice-guidelines-for-video-based-online-mental-health-services.pdf?sfvrsn=6>
- Federation of State Medical Boards. (2014). *Model policy for the appropriate use of telemedicine technologies in the practice of medicine*. Retrieved from [http://www.fsmb.org/pdf/FSMB\\_Telemedicine\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.fsmb.org/pdf/FSMB_Telemedicine_Policy.pdf)
- Kolmes, K. (2014). *Private practice social media policy*. Retrieved from <http://www.drkkolmes.com/docs/socmed.pdf>
- National Association of Social Workers. (2008). *Code of ethics of the National Association of Social Workers*. Retrieved from <http://www.naswdc.org/pubs/code/code.asp>
- National Association of Social Workers and Association of Social Work Boards. (2005). *Standards for technology and social work practice*. Retrieved from <http://www.aswb.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/TechnologySWPractice.pdf>
- Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Social Workers. (2012). *Standards for technology use in social work practice*. Retrieved from [http://www.nlasw.ca/pdf/Standards\\_For\\_Technology\\_Use\\_In\\_Social\\_Work\\_Practice.pdf](http://www.nlasw.ca/pdf/Standards_For_Technology_Use_In_Social_Work_Practice.pdf)
- Online Therapy Institute. (2014). *Ethical framework for use of technology in mental health*. Retrieved from <http://onlinetherapyinstitute.com/ethical-training/>
- Reamer, F. (2013). Social work in a digital age: Ethical and risk management challenges, *Social Work*, 58(2), 163-72.

By: Richard S. Leslie, J.D.

Attorney at Law – “At the Intersection of Law and Psychotherapy”

**LICENSING BOARD ISSUES WARNING TO PATIENTS WHO TRAVEL OUT OF STATE!****Re: Telephone Counseling/Psychotherapy**

Suppose that you have been treating or counseling an adult individual, or a couple, or a child for a period of time for a particular problem. You have informed the client of your office policies and any other information that is required or encouraged by state law or regulation (or by HIPAA) or by applicable ethical standards. At some point during the course of the professional relationship, you learn that the client will be leaving the state for a limited period of time to go on a vacation or business trip, to attend a graduation, wedding or funeral, or for other reasons. The client, while away, may need or choose to contact you by telephone and may require one or more sessions – whether for the typical “hour” or for a shorter period of time.

Should a client expect the therapist’s availability during the period of time when the client is temporarily out of state? May the client call the practitioner during this period of time, without jeopardy to the practitioner, if there is a need to discuss something or to receive counseling, psychotherapy, or other professional services, whether in a crisis situation or otherwise? May the client receive therapy services via a telephone session, without jeopardy to the practitioner, if the practitioner determines that such treatment is necessary or appropriate? “Yes,” or “of course,” has been and should be the answer to these questions.

Such scenarios have occurred for mental health practitioners of all licensures and in all states for multiple decades (half a century for some), and to my knowledge, without problem or controversy and without jeopardy for patients or practitioners. But one state licensing board has recently taken action which shockingly calls into question the legality of such contact between client and practitioner. What has occurred is an affront to clients and potential clients (consumers) in California, and to the mental health professionals regulated by this board.

From the very inception of the existence of the licensing law in the state in which you practice, clients have likely expected and should expect that practitioners will continue to be available during the course of the professional relationship, especially in times of need and even when the client is temporarily out of state – provided that the practitioner has not previously informed the client of any limits on or conditions of such availability. Mental health practitioners of all licensures and from all states recognize the importance of the patient’s

expectation of continuity of care from the practitioner of his or her choice, and they strive to advance the welfare of their clients. I am not aware of any state that has tried to prohibit a licensee of State "A" from speaking with an existing client from State "A" who is temporarily out of State "A" and who has a need for telephone counseling from the treating practitioner located in State "A" - where the professional relationship began and continues.

Recently, however, the Board that regulates California LPCCs, LCSWs, LMFTs, and LEPs has published a notice to California consumers that is alarming. This notice is essentially a travel warning to all current patients and to all California consumers seeking or receiving counseling or psychotherapy from any of these practitioners. The Board notifies California consumers that if they are traveling to another state and wish to engage in psychotherapy or counseling via the telephone (or the internet) with their California-licensed therapist while they are away, their therapist needs to check with the state that the patient is temporarily located in to see if this is permitted. The State of California, through one of its many regulatory boards, is thus suggesting to patients who are already in treatment with their California-licensed practitioners that they may not be able to get continuing and necessary treatment from their therapists via telephone if they temporarily cross the borders of California!

Such a notion strikes this writer as absurd and contrary to decades of safe and ethical practice nationwide, where the best interests of patients have long been served by the continuity of care commonly expected and received by patients. This travel warning to the California consumer is related to and based upon a regulation recently enacted by the same Board (see the article entitled The Regulation of Telehealth/Online Therapy and Informed Consent in the July/August 2016 issue of the Bulletin). The regulation says that the California licensee may provide "telehealth services" to a client located in another jurisdiction only if the California licensee 1) meets the requirements to lawfully provide services in that other jurisdiction, and 2) only if the delivery of services via telehealth is allowed by that jurisdiction. The use of the word "located" in the regulation seemingly forms the basis for the Board's ill-advised, over-broad, and harmful travel warning to California consumers.

With respect to # 2, the Board that is supposed to be protecting California consumers takes the position that if the state where the client is presently located (on vacation, for example) does not allow for the delivery of services via telehealth, clients cannot call their California-based therapists and receive needed treatment when they are physically in that other state. Such a notion seems bizarre, but a violation of the regulation would apparently constitute unprofessional conduct for the California licensee! The possibility that some jurisdiction may not allow for the delivery of services via telehealth should not mean that a licensee from

California would be precluded from continuing to treat a patient via the telephone when the patient is temporarily traveling (located) in that other state or country.

The Board has publicly stated that it "... does not have jurisdiction over a therapist practicing telehealth with a client who is located in another state," yet the regulation it enacted indicates otherwise. The regulation, in part, allows the Board to pursue disciplinary action against a licensee if the licensee does not meet the requirements to provide professional services in the state where the patient happens to be temporarily located. Moreover, the Board notifies patients/consumers that if they travel out of California, their therapist is required to check with the state that the patient is located in to see if the therapist can lawfully provide treatment via the telephone according to that state's laws and regulations!

It is a strange fiction to believe that in order to accept and appropriately respond to a telephone call from an established client in need, a therapist would be expected or required to meet the requirements for practice in one or more states or countries as the California client travels about. What specific requirements must be met? Is the therapist committing the crime of practicing without a license in the other state by responding to the patient's phone call? Moreover, to think that the treating licensee would be expected to communicate with clerks of one or more licensing boards of other states or countries, or that the licensee is going to get timely and reliable answers to questions about the propriety of responding to the treatment needs (sometimes sudden and unexpected) of the California domiciled patient, is unrealistic, unnecessary, and unreasonable.

In reality, it would be up to the state where the patient is temporarily located to take the position, assuming they somehow learn of and care about the telephone counseling session(s), that the California licensee was practicing without a license in their state (typically a crime). *What licensing board in the country would be so irresponsible, so uninformed, and so out of control to think that it could or should interfere with or criminalize an established California based therapist-client relationship merely because the patient is temporarily traveling in its state and chooses to use a telephone to communicate with the therapist in California?*

Consumers who become aware of this travel warning will be concerned that traveling may interfere with their right to continuity of care with their therapist of choice. Practitioners fearful of disciplinary action by the State will hesitate to treat at times when the patient is in need, thus raising the abandonment issue. The development of telehealth nationwide is intended to improve patient access and to remove unnecessary or arbitrary barriers to treatment. The Board's travel warning issued to California consumers limits patient access, causes harm to the therapeutic relationship, and creates multiple problems and dilemmas for practitioners.

Therapists and counselors in all states are rightly concerned about protecting their licenses and livelihoods, and therefore they seek to avoid civil, criminal, or administrative jeopardy by practicing with care and by complying with ethical standards and applicable laws and regulations. Now, these affected California practitioners are subjected to possible disciplinary action simply because a telephone was used by client and practitioner while the client was traveling outside of California! If California consumers and practitioners were to become fully aware and educated about the precedent setting dangers this travel warning poses to the historic and special therapist - patient relationship, this warning would likely be retracted following the resulting anger and protest over this senseless government overreach.