



New York State Society for Clinical Social Work, Inc.

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Memorandum in Opposition: A.6008 (Bronson) / S.5301 (Brouk)

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to education requirements and authorization to develop assessment-based treatment plans for certain mental health practitioners.

The New York State Society for Clinical Social Work (NYSSCSW) was founded in 1968 to address growing needs for professional support for private practice clinicians and to assist in navigating insurance reimbursement issues. NYSSCSW incorporated in 1970 and has continued to provide educational, professional and legislative services to its members. Among the notable achievements of the Society are its collaboration with other clinical social work organizations to develop a Code of Ethics; legislative efforts to increase the role of clinical social workers in the delivery of services; and to acquire and protect opportunities for insurance reimbursement for services. With the Society's efforts, in 2002, New York State enacted a licensing system for clinical social workers. NYSSCSW continues to be a leader in providing education and support for the profession and in the forefront in promoting the clinical social profession statewide.

The New York State Society for Clinical Social Work (NYSSCSW) opposes the expansion of the Mental Health Practitioners' scope of practice for the following reasons:

Licensing laws are written to protect the consumer from untrained professionals and unscrupulous practices. A careful reading of this bill reveals its intent to expand the practice of these practitioners to include a diagnostic privilege otherwise reserved for licensed professionals such as licensed clinical social workers and licensed psychologists who have extensive educational training and corresponding clinical experience.

NYSSCSW supports the enhancement of practice standards for mental health professionals. Accordingly, we would support the granting of a privilege to diagnose to any mental health professional who aligns their educational and experience standards with those of existing licensed professionals such as licensed clinical social workers and licensed psychologists. More specifically:

- ✓ Equivalency in clinical coursework currently approved for licensed clinical social workers/psychologists including at least 12 semester hours of **clinical content** in **diagnosis** and assessment, clinical treatment and clinical practice with general and special populations; and
- ✓ Equivalency in full time supervised clinical experience in diagnosis, psychotherapy and assessment-based treatment plans consisting of not less than **2,000 client face-to-face contact** hours.

Consumer protection requires these standards of clinical course and experience concentrations as well as appropriate examinations which demonstrates clinical competencies, be met before diagnostic privilege is awarded.

Thank you for your attention,

Marsha Wineburgh

Marsha Wineburgh, DSW, LCSW-R
NYSSCSW, Legislative chair

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