



BEMIDJI
STATE UNIVERSITY

March 4, 2022

Patrick McQuillan, Committee Administrator
Health Finance and Policy Committee
477 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Mr. McQuillan:

My name is Rebecca Hoffman and I am the chair of Bemidji State University's Social Work Department. I also run a social work licensure supervision group. I am writing, along with my social work licensure supervisees, regarding a recent bill (HF2743) that would allow social workers to access 100% of their licensure supervision through electronic means. Recent graduates of Bemidji State University's Social Work Program face more barriers to licensure supervision than their urban counterparts.

Graduates of BSU's Social Work Department face multiple barriers to licensure supervision. The greatest barriers include lack of licensing supervisors in rural communities and distance needed to travel to access supervision. Furthermore, lack of agency support results in newly licensed social workers having to access supervision during unpaid breaks and paying for it out-of-pocket as a non-reimbursable expense. Regardless of setting, newly licensed practitioners want social work licensure supervision because of its many benefits. They've worked hard and paid a significant amount of money to successfully complete a BSW degree, pass the ASWB exam and have earned the right to display the LSW credentials behind their names as a demonstration of their competency. Face-to-face video conferencing is the *only* way many newly licensed LSWs can access licensure supervision, especially in greater Minnesota, a requirement during the first two years of licensure. Some of the key barriers to LSW licensure supervision in rural MN include:

- **Distance** travelled to supervision makes it difficult for newly licensed LSWs to access supervision. One member of this licensure supervision group must drive 35 miles each way for supervision in-person. She needs to do this at the end of the workday and her travel time is unpaid. Due to the late time of day, she must pick up dinner in town and bring it home for her family of five, adding to the expense of in-person supervision. She is also paying for supervision out of her own pocket. In this licensure supervision group, based in Northwestern MN, roundtrip distance from supervisee to supervisor is as follows:
 - 72 miles
 - 332 miles
 - 78 miles
 - 5 miles
 - 7 miles
 - 80 milesTOTAL 574 miles

- **Lack of agency support** for paid supervision time. Many organizations don't understand the importance of supervision for new social workers. In this licensure group, newly licensed grads are receiving pushback from agency administrators about the four hours spent in supervisory meetings each month. Many newly licensed social workers have resorted to participating in supervision during non-paid breaks as a result. Having to travel to face-to-face supervision meetings make accessing supervision even more prohibitive. Video conferencing for supervision is critical.
- **No on-site licensure supervision.** Many rural human service agencies have not invested in credentialing their currently licensed social worker pool for the purposes of licensure supervision. In this supervision group, only one of the members has access to licensure supervision at their workplace. One member of this licensure supervision group has not been able to secure *any* 1:1 supervision in the first year of licensure because of this shortage. This makes having access to supervision via face-to-face video conferencing critical.
- **Mobility** of recent grads. When licensure supervision has been established, newly licensed LSWs wish to continue with their original licensure supervisors, even if relocating to a different city. It is not uncommon for newly licensed graduates to move to an urban area for either employment and/or graduate school opportunities. Continuing with their original supervisor and supervision group requires face-to-face video conferencing options in these situations.

Other Barriers to Licensure Supervision:

- **Lack of agency support** in paying for licensure supervision. Most newly licensed LSWs have to cover the cost of licensure supervision out-of-pocket as agency supervisors are not supportive of covering this expense on behalf of their employees.
 - Due to this, this licensure supervision group has had to switch to three one-hour sessions each month (from one two-hour session) to make it accessible to LSWs who do not have agency support for supervision time, requiring them to use their two fifteen-minute breaks and 30-minute lunch break for supervision time.

Sincerely,



Rebecca Hoffman, DSW, MSW, LISW
 Tashina Branchaud, LSW, LADC
 James Hatteberg, LSW
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 Tera Nelson, LSW