



# NASW

National Association of Social Workers / Connecticut Chapter

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## **2022 Legislative Report on Social Work Successes**

The following list gives the various provisions and bills passed in the 2022 state legislative session, bills that NASW/CT stopped and bills/proposals that did not pass. Many of the bills and provisions within omnibus children's mental health bills were recommended by NASW/CT and in some cases were solely due to ideas that NASW/CT brought forward.

The 2022 legislative session was the most productive for advancement of social work in at least 30 years. It was in many ways the Year of the Social Worker as a response to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. NASW/CT mobilized members in support of these bills and pro-actively lobbied in support or opposition to the bills listed here.

### **Legislation Passed**

- Grants for hiring mental health professionals in public schools, includes social workers.
- Loan repayment program through the Department of Public Health (DPH) added licensed social workers to the list of eligible professions.
- LCSWs were added to the Police Accountability law (passed in 2020). Allows trauma informed LCSWs to conduct mental health assessments of police officers. Law only had psychiatrists and psychologists.
- Changes the temporary license so it begins upon issuance instead of at graduation date; extends the temporary license from 120 days to one year until 6/30/24; allows the temporary license holder to continue to keep the temporary license even if they fail the exam until 6/30/24.
- Reciprocity for license if the out of state licensee has at least 4 years licensed experience in another jurisdiction and license is in good standing. DPH may still deny reciprocity if applicant's license is not sufficient to CT standards.
- Creates a needs-based grant program to pay for the LMSW license application fee of \$220.
- Creates a grant program for pediatrician offices to hire a social worker with the grant paying half of the salary.
- Requires DPH to issue a license to applicants in certain professions who have a past felony. Sets criteria for approval to sit for the exam, gives the applicant a vehicle to explain their circumstance and DPH must respond within 30 days as to whether the applicant can go forward with the license application. Social workers

are one of three mental health professions in the bill. Current law summarily denies licensure to those who had a felony.

- Creates a grant program to pay FQHCs to hire licensed social workers for primary care with children.
- Extends Medicaid provider status to LMSWs in existing private practices where there is clinical supervision.
- Changes professional title from Certified Independent Social Worker to Licensed Clinical Social Worker in current statute allowing for certain licensed mental health clinicians to counsel minors without parental notification. Incorrect title was in effect since 1995.
- Allows DPH to set rules for nursing home social work ratios until regulations are issued and pro-rates the 60 beds to 1 social worker ratio (example, a 90-bed facility requires 1.5 social workers).
- Allows out of state social workers who have an existing therapeutic relationship to continue treating their client through telehealth when the person is in Connecticut. Sunsets 6/30/24 however NASW/CT will try to make it permanent in 2023 legislative session.
- Task forces on various mental health issues include licensed clinical social workers amongst appointees.

#### **Legislation Stopped/Modified**

- Bill to require school social workers to make two home visits per school year to every student they work with.
- Bill allowing UCONN Wellness Center on main campus to allow LCSWs and APRNs to certify emergency transportation of a student to a hospital in cases of mental health crisis. CT Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services has a required 8-hour certification program before certain providers can make emergency certification orders. This bill did not require the training.
- A section of a bill that did the same as the above bullet for LCSWs responding with police officers to a mental health call.
- A bill that would have limited the use of telehealth to providers who had a significant physical presence in CT.
- Modified language that would have allowed public school districts to request of the State Department of Education permission to hire persons with certain baccalaureate degrees to perform mental health functions in public schools. This bill had strong support in the Education Committee however was ultimately changed to a study bill.

#### **Legislation Not Passed**

- Grant program to pay for social workers in emergency homeless shelters.
- Change the social work license renewal from one to two years at the current fee.