



NORTH CAROLINA SOCIAL WORK CERTIFICATION AND LICENSURE BOARD

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November 30, 2020

To: The Lt. Leg. Administrative Procedure Oversight Committee (Virginia.Barlow@ncleg.gov)
The Lt. Leg. Commission on Governmental Operations (govops@ncleg.net)
The Office of State Budget and Management (Charles.perusse@osbm.nc.gov)

From: The North Carolina Social Work & Certification Licensure Board

Re: Interim Report Required by SL 2020-097, Section 3.20(c)

Dear Sir or Madam:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this interim report on efforts taken by the North Carolina Social Work & Certification Licensure Board (the “Board”) to exercise regulatory flexibility, due to the impacts of COVID-19, while continuing to safeguard the public health, safety, welfare, and economic well-being of citizens and businesses in North Carolina. The Board has taken the following steps:

1. On April 8, 2020, the Board promulgated 21 NCAC 63 .0810 titled WAIVER as an Emergency Rule and later as a Temporary Rule. That Rule provided that the Board shall waive the requirement for licensure set forth in:
 - a. 21 NCAC 63 .0211(a)(4) that requires preapproval by the Board to engage in more than 20 hours of supervision provided through the use of technology. This waiver will allow for up to half of the required supervision hours to be provided through the use of technology.
 - b. 21 NCAC 63 .0301 that requires applicants for licensure to pass the qualifying examination within two years of the initial application. An applicant who is unable to take the licensing examination prior to the expiration of the associate license due to the testing service locations being closed shall make a written request to the Board for an extension of time to take the licensing examination. The Board shall provide a limited extension of the licensee's associate license and grant each associate licensee an extension to take the licensing examination until December 31, 2020.
 - c. The Board shall waive the requirement for licensure set forth in 21 NCAC 63 .0401(c)(4) that allows for half of the required continuing education accepted as distance learning and shall permit all hours for renewal to be accepted through distance learning that meet the requirements of 21 NCAC 63 .0401. A minimum of four contact hours of distance learning continuing education shall be focused on ethics related to social work practice and ethical decision making.
2. On September 11, 2020, the Board resolved to approve all LCSWA waiver requests despite whether the licensee was impacted by test center closures and extend all LCSWA licenses expiring this year until December 31, 2020 to allow for renewal of the LCSWA license without having to pass the clinical examination as required by statute. The Board further resolved that any LCSWA

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licenses that expired between May and September should be granted licensure extension until December 31, 2020.

3. On September 20, 2019, the Board adopted 21 NCAC 63 .0215 PETITION FOR PREDETERMINATION effective February 1, 2020. These rules implement G.S. 93B-8.1(b6) and establish procedures for an applicant with a criminal record to request pretermination on their application.
4. The Board has considered, on a case-by-case basis, requests from regulated individuals for regulatory flexibility, to waive the two year experience requirement to examine, and allowed those individuals until July 1, 2021 to meet the examination requirement.
5. The Board has also on a case-by-case basis, waived the reinstatement fees required with renewals that were received after the expiration of the license.
6. The Board has made administrative exceptions regarding submission of documents required for application and licensure. We have allowed transcripts, license verification and exam scores to be submitted electronically instead of requiring submission by mail in order to reduce in person contact and to provide further convenience due to closures.

In reaching these decisions, the Board considered that the practice of social work was deemed an essential service pursuant to Executive Order 121. The Board has not experienced any discernable reduction in applications or renewals as a result of COVID-19.

If you have any questions or desire any additional information, you are welcome to contact me directly.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Pope, MSW, LCSW

Elizabeth Pope, MSW, LCSW
Executive Director