

Marh 16, 2021

HB2208 - Proponent Testimony – Written Only
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Chairman Hilderbrand and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to address your Committee on behalf of the Kansas Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (KS-NASW). Social workers have been licensed at three levels of practice since 1976 - baccalaureate (LBSW), the master (LMSW), and the independent clinical social worker (LSCSW). Licensed Social workers are the largest provider of mental health services and provide more services than all the other BSRB licensed mental health care providers combined in Kansas.

NASW-Kansas Chapter supports the amendments included in HB 2208 and the work of the Mental Health Modernization and Reform Committee to address recruitment, retention, and staffing shortages across Kansas.

Kansas NASW supported both amendments which mirror the work of your Committee with SB 238.

- 1) The House Committee **removed the additional 200 (currently 350 hours is required)** language requirement for direct client contact hours during the master of social work (MSW) field internship.
 - Kansas is the only state in the nation with this additional requirement – (K.S.A. 65-6306 (C)).
 - The current statutory requirement creates an incentive for bachelor level students to move to neighboring states for their graduate work.
 - Kansas social work graduate programs average 1,200 hours due to this extra 350 hour mandate.
 - The national standard for accreditation is 900 hours by the Council of Social Work Education.
- 2) The House committee also removed and amended out the **new “Board Approved Supervisor” mandate** from HB 2208. This requirement added an additional new layer of cost for a social worker with a graduate degree to achieve their clinical license. This requirement would delay the addition of more clinicians in Kansas.

During this pandemic our seniors, farmers, families, and schools are struggling with depression, anxiety, and suicide and now more than ever our policies must not place additional obstacles to grow the mental health workforce.

Behavioral Health Provider Shortages Creates Barriers to Mental Health Service Provision in Kansas

The 2020 Special Committee on Mental Health Modernization and Reform reported on the shortages of behavioral health professions. The Committee documented difficulties with recruitment and retention of qualified professionals across the mental health continuum of care. The large numbers of retiring baby boomers are compounding the workforce shortage.

NASW KS Chapter supports modernizing licensing definitions to include telehealth service options.

HB 2208 permits BSRB to update face to face licensing definitions for social workers and social work students in regulations to include telehealth service options.

Currently, there are rural counties in the state that have no licensed psychologists or social workers.

Licensed Specialist Clinical Social Workers Across Kansas

83 – Western Kansas

1,672 – Eastern Kansas

1,755 – Statewide

Licensed Clinical Social Workers Compared to Neighboring States (2019)

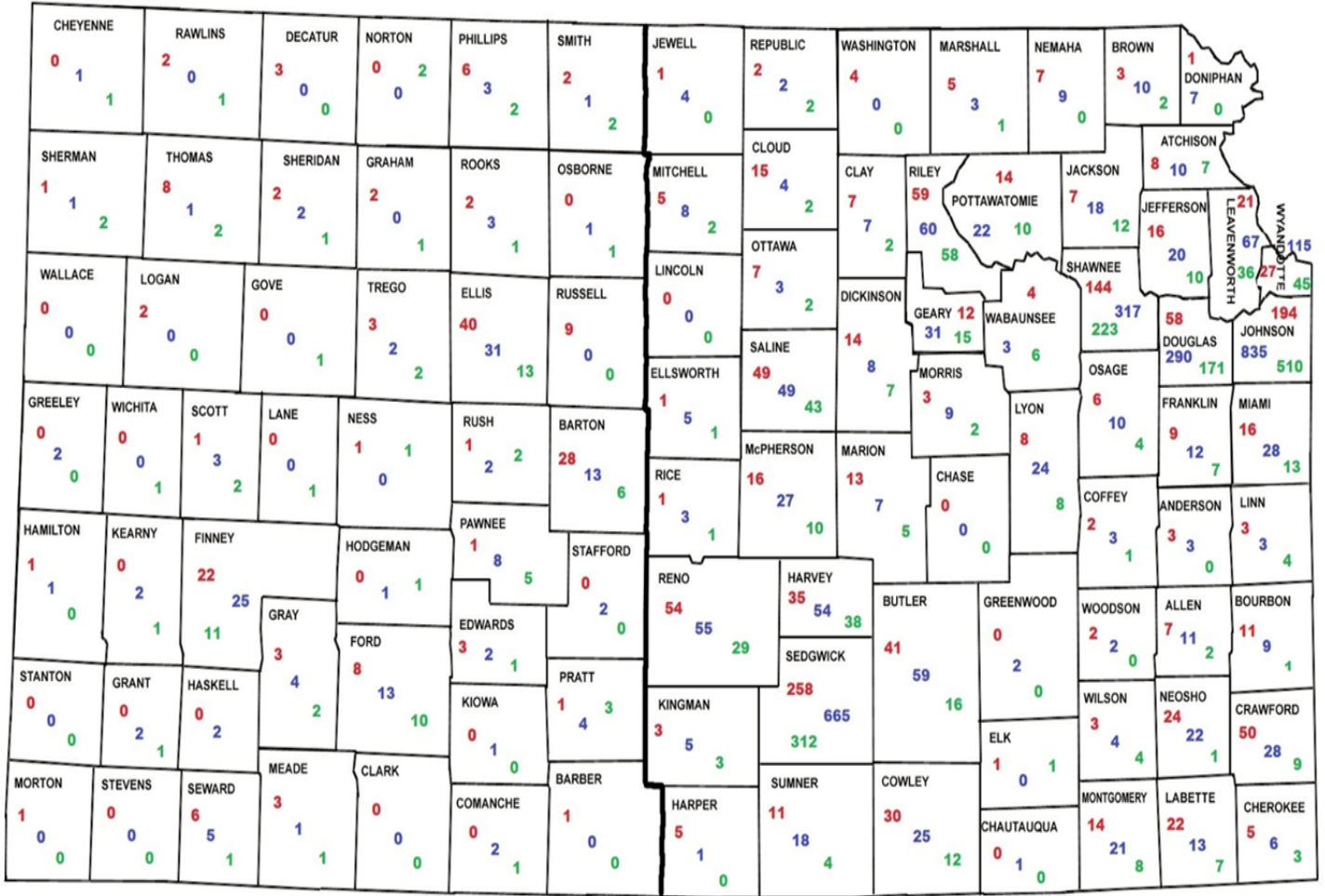
State	Licensed Clinical Social Worker	Licensed Master Social Worker	Total	Percent of Clinical Social Workers of Total Graduate Workforce
Missouri	5939	1857	7796	76 %
Colorado	6090	1612	7702	79 %
Oklahoma	2761	1072	3833	72 %
*Kansas	1755	3169	4916	36 %

Chairman Hilderbrand and Members of the Committee, we ask that you adopt HB 2208 with the included amendments by the House Health and Human Services that were also include by the Senate Public Health Welfare Committee in SB 238.

Today, Kansas is facing a severe shortage of trained mental health responders. Through HB 2208, the Kansas Legislature has the opportunity to increase citizens' access to mental health care by increasing access to appropriately trained licensed professionals.

We believe that a system with less bureaucratic layers will increase access to critical mental health services for Kansans.

Licensed Bachelor, Master, and Specialist Clinical Social Workers (2019)



Licensed Bachelor Social Workers

Statewide LBSW total=1,414
 Western Kansas LBSW total=73
 Eastern Kansas LBSW total=1,341

LBSW in Western KS: 5%
 LBSW in Eastern KS: 95%

Licensed Masters Social Workers

Statewide LMSW total=3,178
 Western Kansas LMSW total=73
 Eastern Kansas LMSW total=3,037

LMSW in Western KS: 4%
 LMSW in Eastern KS: 96%

Licensed Specialist Clinical Social Workers

Statewide LSCSW total=1,755
 Western Kansas LSCSW total=83
 Eastern Kansas LSCSW total=1,672

LSCSW in Western KS: 4.7%
 LSCSW in Eastern KS: 95.2%