



LAWS OF ALASKA

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Chapter No.
118

AN ACT

Prohibiting the use of the title "social worker" without a license; relating to social workers, licensure of social workers, and the Board of Clinical Social Work Examiners; and providing for an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

THE ACT FOLLOWS ON PAGE 1

Approved by the Governor: June 22, 1998

Actual Effective Date: Section 30 takes effect June 23, 1998; AS 08.95.100(a) and (b)(2) - (4), as amended by secs. 10 and 11, take effect September 1, 1999; AS 08.95.100(b)(1) enacted by sec. 11, and AS 08.95.911, enacted by sec. 19, take effect July 1, 2000; remainder of Act takes effect January 1, 1999

AN ACT

1 Prohibiting the use of the title "social worker" without a license; relating to social workers,
2 licensure of social workers, and the Board of Clinical Social Work Examiners; and providing
3 for an effective date.

4

5 * **Section 1.** PURPOSE. It is the purpose of this Act to promote, preserve, and protect the
6 public health, safety, and welfare through the licensure of social workers and regulation of the
7 use of the title "social worker."

8 * **Sec. 2.** AS 08.01.010(10) is amended to read:

9 (10) Board of [CLINICAL] Social Work Examiners (AS 08.95.010);

10 * **Sec. 3.** AS 08.01.050(d)(1) is amended to read:

11 (1) Board of [CLINICAL] Social Work Examiners;

12 * **Sec. 4.** AS 08.03.010(c)(6) is amended to read:

13 (6) Board of [CLINICAL] Social Work Examiners (AS 08.95.010) --

14 June 30, 2005;

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1 * Sec. 5. AS 08.95.010(a) is amended to read:

2 (a) There is created the Board of [CLINICAL] Social Work Examiners
3 composed of five members, as follows: one member [FOUR MEMBERS MUST
4 BE PERSONS] licensed under this chapter as a baccalaureate social worker; one
5 member licensed under this chapter as a master social worker; two members
6 licensed under this chapter as clinical social workers; and one public member who
7 has never been licensed under this chapter. At [, INCLUDING AT] least one of
8 the licensed members must be a person who is not an employee of a federal, state,
9 or local government or of a private nonprofit organization that is exempt from federal
10 income tax. [ONE MEMBER MUST BE A PUBLIC MEMBER.]

11 * Sec. 6. AS 08.95.020 is amended to read:

12 **Sec. 08.95.020. Board meetings.** The board shall hold at least two meetings
13 [ONE MEETING] each year. The board may hold additional meetings at the call of
14 the chair or of a majority of the board members.

15 * Sec. 7. AS 08.95.030 is amended to read:

16 **Sec. 08.95.030. Duties.** The board shall

17 (1) issue licenses to qualified applicants;

18 (2) [SUBMIT AN ANNUAL REPORT OF ITS PROCEEDINGS TO
19 THE DEPARTMENT;

20 (3) AFTER A HEARING, IMPOSE DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS ON
21 A PERSON WHO VIOLATES THIS CHAPTER OR THE REGULATIONS OR
22 ORDERS OF THE BOARD;

23 (4)] adopt regulations

24 (A) requiring that continuing education requirements be satisfied
25 before a license is renewed;

26 (B) establishing a code of professional ethics that a licensee
27 must observe;

28 (C) establishing standards of practice for social work
29 performed by a licensee; and

30 (D) establishing standards for supervisors and for
31 supervision that is required for licensure under AS 08.95.110(a);

1 (3) [(5)] adopt regulations necessary to carry out the duties and
2 purpose of this chapter.

3 * Sec. 8. AS 08.95.040(a) is amended to read:

4 (a) The board shall adopt continuing education requirements for persons
5 licensed under this chapter. Continuing education requirements that must be satisfied
6 before the first biennial renewal of a person's license must include a minimum of
7 45 hours [PER BIENNIUM] of education or training with a minimum of three hours
8 in professional ethics, six hours in substance abuse, and six hours in cross-cultural
9 education that includes issues relating to Alaska [EMPHASIZING ALASKAN]
10 Natives. After the first biennial renewal of a license, continuing education
11 requirements for that person's license renewal must include three hours in
12 professional ethics, six hours in substance abuse, and six hours in cross-cultural
13 education, three hours of which must include issues relating to Alaska Natives.

14 * Sec. 9. AS 08.95 is amended by adding a new section to article 1 to read:

15 **Sec. 08.95.050. Disciplinary sanctions.** The board may impose a disciplinary
16 sanction under AS 08.01.075 if it finds that a licensee

17 (1) secured a license through deceit, fraud, or intentional
18 misrepresentation;

19 (2) engaged in deceit, fraud, or intentional misrepresentation in the
20 course of providing professional services or in the course of professional activities;

21 (3) advertised professional services in a false or misleading manner;

22 (4) violated this chapter, a regulation adopted under this chapter, or an
23 order issued by the board;

24 (5) is the subject of a disciplinary sanction or other adverse licensing
25 action in another jurisdiction relating to a social work license;

26 (6) failed to report to the board that the licensee is or was the subject
27 of a disciplinary proceeding or other adverse licensing action in another jurisdiction
28 relating to a social work license;

29 (7) has been convicted of a felony or has been convicted of a
30 misdemeanor that reflects on the licensee's ability to practice competently and
31 professionally;

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1 (8) intentionally or negligently engaged in, or permitted persons under
2 the licensee's supervision to engage in, client care that did not conform to minimum
3 professional standards or to the standards of practice adopted by the board regardless
4 of whether actual injury to the client occurred;

5 (9) continued to practice after becoming unfit due to

6 (A) professional incompetence;

7 (B) failure to keep informed of current professional practices;

8 (C) addiction to or severe dependency on alcohol or other drugs

9 that impairs the ability to practice safely; or

10 (D) physical or mental disability;

11 (10) engaged in lewd, immoral, or unethical conduct in connection with
12 the delivery of professional services to clients; or

13 (11) while licensed to practice clinical social work, engaged in sexual
14 contact with a person during the time period that the person was a client or within two
15 years after termination of the licensee's professional relationship with the client.

16 * Sec. 10. AS 08.95.100(a) is amended to read:

17 (a) A person who practices clinical social work without obtaining a license
18 under this chapter to practice clinical social work [ISSUED BY THE BOARD
19 AND WITHOUT QUALIFYING FOR AN EXEMPTION FROM THIS CHAPTER]
20 is guilty of a class B misdemeanor unless the person is

21 (1) licensed under a provision of this title that is outside this
22 chapter, is practicing within the scope of that license, and is not representing to
23 the public by title or description of service as being engaged in the practice of
24 clinical social work; or

25 (2) practicing clinical social work as a student in a social work
26 program approved by the board.

27 * Sec. 11. AS 08.95.100(b) is amended to read:

28 (b) A person is guilty of a class B misdemeanor if the person [WHO] is not
29 licensed

30 (1) under this chapter and uses the title "social worker" unless the
31 person is exempt from licensure under AS 08.95.911;

1 (2) as a clinical social worker under this chapter [,] or has a clinical
2 social worker [WHOSE] license that is suspended, [OR] revoked, or [WHOSE
3 LICENSE HAS] lapsed, and the person

4 (A) [WHO] uses in connection with the person's name the
5 words or letters "L.C.S.W.," "Licensed Clinical Social Worker," or other letters,
6 words, or insignia indicating or implying that the person is a licensed clinical
7 social worker; [,] or

8 (B) [WHO] in any way, orally [,] or in writing, directly or by
9 implication, holds out as a licensed clinical social worker;

10 (3) as a master social worker under this chapter or has a master
11 social worker license that is suspended, revoked, or lapsed, and the person

12 (A) uses in connection with the person's name the words or
13 letters "L.M.S.W.," "Licensed Master Social Worker," or other letters,
14 words, or insignia indicating or implying that the person is a licensed
15 master social worker; or

16 (B) in any way, orally or in writing, directly or by
17 implication, holds out as being a licensed master social worker; or

18 (4) as a baccalaureate social worker under this chapter or has a
19 baccalaureate social worker license that is suspended, revoked, or lapsed, and the
20 person

21 (A) uses in connection with the person's name the words or
22 letters "L.B.S.W.," "Licensed Baccalaureate Social Worker," or other
23 letters, words, or insignia indicating or implying that the person is a
24 licensed baccalaureate social worker; or

25 (B) in any way, orally or in writing, directly or by
26 implication, holds out as being a licensed baccalaureate social worker [IS
27 GUILTY OF A CLASS B MISDEMEANOR].

28 * Sec. 12. AS 08.95.110 is amended to read:

29 Sec. 08.95.110. License requirements [TO PRACTICE CLINICAL
30 SOCIAL WORK]. (a) The board shall issue a license to practice clinical social
31 work to a person who

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1 (1) has received a master's degree or a doctoral degree in social work
2 from a college or university approved by the board [ACCREDITED BY THE
3 COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION];

4 (2) has completed, within the 10 years before application for licensure
5 and under the supervision of a licensed clinical social worker, licensed psychologist,
6 or licensed psychiatrist [, OR, WITH APPROVAL OF THE BOARD, A CLINICAL
7 SOCIAL WORKER WHO IS EXEMPT FROM THIS CHAPTER UNDER
8 AS 08.95.910.] either

9 (A) a minimum of two years of continuous full-time
10 employment in postgraduate clinical social work; or

11 (B) a minimum of 3,000 hours of less than full-time
12 employment in a period of not less than two years in postgraduate clinical
13 social work; [AT LEAST 100 HOURS OF SUPERVISION REQUIRED
14 UNDER THIS PARAGRAPH SHALL BE CONDUCTED BY A QUALIFIED
15 PERSON APPROVED BY THE BOARD;]

16 (3) is of good moral character;

17 (4) is in good professional standing and is fit to practice social work
18 as determined by the board;

19 (5) [(4)] has provided three professional references that are acceptable
20 to the board, including, if the applicant

21 (A) was previously employed to practice social work, one
22 reference from a person who was the applicant's employer while practicing
23 social work unless the applicant demonstrates to the satisfaction of the
24 board that the applicant is unable to satisfy the requirement of this
25 subparagraph through no fault of the applicant; and

26 (B) is currently employed to practice social work, a
27 reference from the applicant's current employer;

28 (6) [(5)] has satisfactorily completed the examination given by the
29 board for clinical social worker licensing; and

30 (7) [(6)] has paid required fees.

31 * Sec. 13. AS 08.95.110 is amended by adding new subsections to read:

1 (b) The board shall issue a license authorizing use of the title "master social
2 worker" to a person who

3 (1) satisfies the requirements of (a)(1), (3) - (5), and (7) of this section;
4 and

5 (2) has satisfactorily completed the examination given by the board for
6 master social worker licensing.

7 (c) The board shall issue a license authorizing use of the title "baccalaureate
8 social worker" to a person who

9 (1) satisfies the requirements of (a)(3) - (5) and (7) of this section;

10 (2) has received a bachelor's degree in social work from a college or
11 university approved by the board; and

12 (3) has satisfactorily completed the examination given by the board for
13 baccalaureate social worker licensing.

14 * Sec. 14. AS 08.95.120 is amended to read:

15 Sec. 08.95.120. Licensing by credentials. The board shall issue a license to
16 practice clinical social work [WITHOUT EXAMINATION] if the applicant

17 (1) holds a current license to practice clinical social work in another
18 jurisdiction that, at the time of original issuance of the license, had requirements for
19 licensure equal to or more stringent than those of this state;

20 (2) is not the subject of an unresolved complaint or disciplinary action
21 before a regulatory authority or a professional social work association;

22 (3) has provided three professional references that are acceptable
23 to the board, including, if the applicant

24 (A) was previously employed to practice social work, one
25 reference from a person who was the applicant's employer while practicing
26 social work unless the applicant demonstrates to the satisfaction of the
27 board that the applicant is unable to satisfy the requirement of this
28 subparagraph through no fault of the applicant; and

29 (B) is currently employed to practice social work, a
30 reference from the applicant's current employer [NOT FAILED THE
31 EXAMINATION FOR A LICENSE TO PRACTICE CLINICAL SOCIAL

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1 WORK IN THIS STATE];

2 (4) has not had a license to practice clinical social work revoked, [OR]
3 suspended, or surrendered in lieu of disciplinary action in this state or another
4 jurisdiction;

5 (5) has submitted proof of continued competency satisfactory to the
6 board; and

7 (6) has paid required fees.

8 * Sec. 15. AS 08.95.120 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

9 (b) The board shall issue a license to use the title "master social worker" or
10 "baccalaureate social worker," as applicable, to an applicant who

11 (1) holds a current similar license from another jurisdiction that, at the
12 time of original issuance of the license, had requirements for the license that were
13 equal to or more stringent than those of this state;

14 (2) is not the subject of an unresolved complaint or disciplinary action
15 before a regulatory authority or a professional social work association;

16 (3) has provided three professional references that are acceptable to the
17 board, including, if the applicant

18 (A) was previously employed to practice social work, one
19 reference from a person who was the applicant's employer while practicing
20 social work unless the applicant demonstrates to the satisfaction of the board
21 that the applicant is unable to satisfy the requirement of this subparagraph
22 through no fault of the applicant; and

23 (B) is currently employed to practice social work, a reference
24 from the applicant's current employer;

25 (4) has not had a license to practice social work or to use the title
26 "social worker" revoked, suspended, or surrendered in lieu of disciplinary action in this
27 state or another jurisdiction;

28 (5) has submitted proof of continued competency satisfactory to the
29 board; and

30 (6) has paid required fees.

31 * Sec. 16. AS 08.95.900 is amended to read:

1 Sec. 08.95.900. Confidentiality of communication. (a) A licensed
2 [CLINICAL] social worker, and the social worker's employees or other persons
3 who have access to the social worker's records, may not reveal to another person
4 a communication made to the licensee by a client about a matter concerning which the
5 client has employed the licensee in a professional capacity. This section does not
6 apply to

7 (1) a case conference with other licensed [CLINICAL] social workers
8 or with other licensed practitioners of the healing arts [PSYCHOLOGISTS,
9 PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATES, PHYSICIANS, OR SURGEONS];

10 (2) the release of information which the client in writing authorized the
11 licensee to reveal; [OR]

12 (3) information released to the board as part of a disciplinary or
13 other proceeding by the board;

14 (4) information revealed as part of the discovery of evidence related to
15 a court proceeding or introduced in evidence in a court proceeding;

16 (5) communications relevant to the physical, mental, or emotional
17 condition of the client in a proceeding in which the condition of the client is an
18 element of the claim or defense of the client, of a party claiming through or under
19 the client, or of a person raising the client's condition as an element of the
20 person's own case, or of a person claiming as a beneficiary of the client through
21 a contract to which the client is or was a party; or, after the client's death, in a
22 proceeding in which a party puts the condition of the client in issue;

23 (6) a communication to a potential victim or to law enforcement
24 officers where a threat of imminent serious physical harm to an identified victim
25 has been made by a client; or

26 (7) a communication that indicates that another licensed
27 practitioner of the healing arts has committed an act of unprofessional or
28 unlawful conduct in the provision of health or mental health services if the
29 communication is disclosed by the social worker only to the licensing board with
30 jurisdiction over the type of person who allegedly committed the unprofessional
31 or unlawful conduct and the disclosure is made in good faith.

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1 (b) Notwithstanding (a) of this section, a licensed [CLINICAL] social worker
2 shall report incidents of child abuse or neglect as required by AS 47.17.020 and
3 incidents of harm to vulnerable adults as required by AS 47.24.010.

4 * **Sec. 17.** AS 08.95.900 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

5 (c) Information obtained by the board under (a)(3) and (7) of this section is
6 confidential and is not a public record for the purposes of AS 09.25.110 - 09.25.140.

7 * **Sec. 18.** AS 08.95 is amended by adding a new section to read:

8 **Sec. 08.95.905. Immunity relating to certain reports.** A person licensed
9 under this chapter who, in good faith and without malice, discloses to the appropriate
10 licensing board that another licensed practitioner of the healing arts has allegedly
11 committed an act of unprofessional or unlawful conduct in the provision of health or
12 mental health services is immune from civil liability arising out of the disclosure.

13 * **Sec. 19.** AS 08.95 is amended by adding new sections to read:

14 **Sec. 08.95.911. Exemption.** (a) Notwithstanding AS 08.95.100(b)(1), a
15 person who, on June 30, 2000, was employed or providing services under the title
16 "social worker" may, without obtaining a license under this chapter, continue to use
17 the title "social worker" while the person is employed by the same employer or, if self-
18 employed, while providing the same scope of services, as on June 30, 2000.

19 (b) The exemption under (a) of this section does not authorize use of the title
20 "social worker" outside the context of the person's employment or self-employment,
21 as applicable.

22 (c) For purposes of this section, a person who is employed by

23 (1) the federal government is not considered to have changed employers
24 if the person begins employment with a different agency of the federal government;

25 (2) the state is not considered to have changed employers if the person
26 begins employment with a different agency of the state;

27 (3) a municipality is not considered to have changed employers if the
28 person begins employment with a different agency of the municipality.

29 **Sec. 08.95.920. Unified occupation.** For purposes of AS 08.01.065, all
30 persons licensed under this chapter are considered to be engaged in the same
31 occupation.

- 1 * Sec. 20. AS 08.95.990(1) is amended to read:
2 (1) "board" means the Board of [CLINICAL] Social Work Examiners;
- 3 * Sec. 21. AS 08.95.990(2) is amended to read:
4 (2) "[CLINICAL] social work" means a service in which a special
5 knowledge of social resources, human capabilities, and the part that unconscious
6 motivation plays in determining behavior is directed, through the application of social
7 work principles and methods, at helping individuals to achieve more adequate,
8 satisfying, and productive social adjustments;
- 9 * Sec. 22. AS 08.95.990(5) is amended to read:
10 (5) "social work principles and methods" include counseling [AND
11 USING TECHNIQUES OF APPLIED PSYCHOTHERAPY] of a nonmedical nature
12 to assist in the [DIAGNOSIS AND] treatment of mental and emotional conditions of
13 individuals, families, and groups; providing information and referral services; providing
14 or arranging for the provision of social services; explaining and interpreting the
15 psychosocial aspects in the situations of individuals, families, or groups; helping
16 communities to organize, provide, or improve social and health services; and doing
17 research related to social work.
- 18 * Sec. 23. AS 08.95.990 is amended by adding new paragraphs to read:
19 (6) "clinical social work" means the diagnosis of psychiatric disorders
20 and the use of techniques of applied psychotherapy of a nonmedical nature while
21 practicing social work;
22 (7) "practitioner of the healing arts" has the meaning given in
23 AS 47.17.290.
- 24 * Sec. 24. AS 47.17.020(a) is amended to read:
25 (a) The following persons who, in the performance of their occupational duties,
26 have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has suffered harm as a result of child
27 abuse or neglect shall immediately report the harm to the nearest office of the
28 department:
29 (1) practitioners of the healing arts;
30 (2) school teachers and school administrative staff members of public
31 and private schools;

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- 1 (3) [SOCIAL WORKERS;
2 (4)] peace officers [,] and officers of the Department of Corrections;
3 (4) [(5)] administrative officers of institutions;
4 (5) [(6)] child care providers;
5 (6) [(7)] paid employees of domestic violence and sexual assault
6 programs, and crisis intervention and prevention programs as defined in AS 18.66.990;
7 (7) [(8)] paid employees of an organization that provides counseling or
8 treatment to individuals seeking to control their use of drugs or alcohol.

9 * Sec. 25. AS 47.17.290(13) is amended to read:

10 (13) "practitioner of the healing arts" includes chiropractors, mental
11 health counselors, social workers, dental hygienists, dentists, health aides, nurses,
12 nurse practitioners, occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants,
13 optometrists, osteopaths, naturopaths, physical therapists, physical therapy assistants,
14 physicians, physician's assistants, psychiatrists, psychologists, psychological associates,
15 audiologists licensed under AS 08.11, hearing aid dealers licensed under AS 08.55,
16 marital and family therapists licensed under AS 08.63, religious healing practitioners,
17 acupuncturists, and surgeons;

18 * Sec. 26. AS 08.95.100(c) is repealed July 1, 2000.

19 * Sec. 27. AS 08.95.910 is repealed September 1, 1999.

20 * Sec. 28. TRANSITIONAL LICENSING. (a) The Board of Social Work Examiners shall
21 issue a license authorizing use of the title "baccalaureate social worker" to a person who, by
22 July 1, 2000,

23 (1) applies for the license;

24 (2) satisfies the requirements of AS 08.95.110(c)(1) and (3), as enacted by
25 sec. 13 of this Act; and

26 (3) submits evidence satisfactory to the board of having used the title "social
27 worker" during the performance of employment duties or the provision of services for
28 compensation before applying for the license under this section.

29 (b) A person licensed under this section is considered to be licensed under AS 08.95.

30 * Sec. 29. TRANSITIONAL BOARD MEMBERSHIP PROVISIONS. Notwithstanding
31 AS 08.95.010(a), as amended by sec. 5 of this Act, a person who is a member of the Board

1 of Clinical Social Work Examiners on January 1, 1999, may continue to serve the remainder
2 of the person's term on the board unless removed under other law. The governor shall
3 implement AS 08.95.010(a), as amended by sec. 5 of this Act, as seats on the board become
4 vacant.

5 * **Sec. 30.** REGULATIONS. The Board of Social Work Examiners shall begin the process
6 of developing regulations to implement this Act. The regulations take effect under AS 44.62
7 but not before the effective date of the laws that are implemented by the regulations.

8 * **Sec. 31.** Section 30 of this Act takes effect immediately.

9 * **Sec. 32.** AS 08.95.100(a) and (b)(2) - (4), as amended by secs. 10 and 11 of this Act,
10 take effect September 1, 1999.

11 * **Sec. 33.** AS 08.95.100(b)(1), enacted by sec. 11 of this Act, and AS 08.95.911, enacted
12 by sec. 19 of this Act, take effect July 1, 2000.

13 * **Sec. 34.** Except as provided in secs. 31 - 33 of this Act, this Act takes effect January 1,
14 1999.