

UPDATE – 07/29/2020

On behalf of the Board of Directors – Oklahoma State Board of Licensed Social Workers

As the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) situation continues to develop in Oklahoma, state leaders have been working to put plans in place to ensure Oklahomans are protected. The Oklahoma State Board of Licensed Social Workers (OSBSLW) is committed to service and safety for all Oklahomans, including the safety of those served by the OSBSLW (our licensees).

The below information represents updated information about Continuing Education, Supervision Requirements, Tele-health Practice, Supervisor Workshops and Pearson Vue Testing.

1) Continuing Education Units for Calendar Year 2020:

Please know the OSBSLW does recognize the significance of the COVID-19 event and its potential impact for social workers to meet their continuing education requirements as per agency policy this year. **At the Board Meeting held on May 29th, 2020, the Board of Directors voted to leave the continuing education requirements as is and as outlined in the Agency Rules (no changes).**

Please note that our agency rules **HAVE ALWAYS** allowed for ALL 16 CE credit hours to be acquired online, even prior to the development of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the approved providers through the licensure board are now offering live, webinar based training. These events count as “IN-PERSON” (Category I). The Board of Social Work does NOT maintain a list of CE training events, only the contact information for the approved provider. The licensee maintains the responsibility of communicating with the provider to determine the type of CE Credit offered for events attended.

Additionally, there are many online providers who currently offer “live webinars” and are approved through ASWB or NASW.

As per agency rule 675:15-1-3(b)(1), live webinars count as Category I learning events (face to face).

Some online providers offering live webinars approved through ASWB and NASW National include:

- www.lnrseminars.com
- www.Pesi.com
- www.Tzkseminars.com

In general, licensees are required to obtain sixteen (16) hours of continuing education in order to renew for the following calendar year. Eight (8) hours must be a combination of Category I (face to face) or Category II (formally organized state or national meetings), the other eight (8) may be Category 1, Category II or Category III. Three (3) of those sixteen (16) hours must include ethics training. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO RECEIVE THE ETHICS TRAINING AS PART OF YOUR FACE TO FACE. ETHICS may be completed online as long as you have met the 8 hour requirement for CATEGORY I/II.

2) Clinical Supervision – Electronic Supervision:

The OSBSLW is offering blanket approval for continued use of electronic supervision for those currently under supervision for clinical licensure, administrative licensure, or the advanced generalist licensure.

This blanket approval will remain in effect through AT LEAST the end of this calendar year, e.g., December 31st, 2020.

It is the responsibility of the Supervisor and Supervisee to assure confidentiality of client system information and that health information is protected. The electronic platform will be determined and agreed to between the Supervisor and Supervisee, e.g., video through FB Messenger, face-time, SKYPE, videoconferencing, etc. The supervisor and supervisee should consider the setting at their respective locations so the supervision consultation remains private and without distraction. Due to the lack of security for many of the available electronic platforms, the use of client specific information during the supervisory consultation, e.g., name, DOB, etc. is PROHIBITED. The OSBSLW is simply offering a reminder that the quality of the supervisory experience is predicated on the “clinical issue”, not the demographics of the client system.

3) Telehealth regulations:

There are no rules, regulations, or statutory requirements that prohibit social workers from providing services electronically. Some things to take into consideration should you move forward with providing social work services via an electronic platform:

- **HIPAA rules remain in effect.** It is incumbent upon the practitioner to observe all HIPAA requirements and to protect the health information of their client systems, no differently than face-to-face interactions.
 - This includes storage of information such as assessments, progress notes, treatment plans, etc. It is entirely the responsibility of the practitioner to ensure the confidentiality of the client system is protected, regardless of how the service is being offered.
 - If you work within an agency setting and are planning to work off-site, have a discussion with them about setting up VPN access to your agency computer system. This would allow you to work off-site and still enter information through a secure platform.
 - The OSBSLW does not maintain a list of approved electronic platforms for tele-therapy, but this an acceptable form of practice. The practitioner should research available platforms and use the one they are comfortable with and that allows you to remain HIPAA compliant.
- **Consult with your payer systems.** While tele-therapy is an acceptable and legal form of practice, practitioners/agencies should be consulting with their payer systems for a determination of compensability should this form of practice be used. Not all payer systems provide reimbursement for tele-therapy services.
- **Consult with other jurisdictions.** If you are considering providing tele-therapy services to a client system physically located in another jurisdiction (example, a college student you were providing services to returned to their home state because their University in Oklahoma closed their doors), you **MUST** check with that jurisdiction for a determination of whether or not you

need to be licensed in that jurisdiction. The requirement on this varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

- **Best Practice – Technology Standards.** See <https://www.aswb.org/news/technology-standards-in-social-work-practice/> for information about the standards and use of technology for social work practice (is considered to be best practice).

4) Supervisor Training:

The Board Approved Supervisor Training for the remainder of this year will be held virtually using Microsoft Teams.

5) ASWB Exam Testing and Pearson Vue:

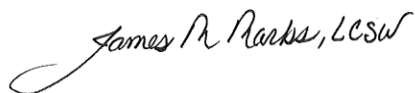
For updates regarding ASWB operations and Pearson Vue testing sites, visit <https://www.aswb.org/covid-19>

6) Recommendations from CDC/WHO/OK State Department of Health, etc.:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) recommend routine hand hygiene, cough and sneeze etiquette, staying home when you are sick and routine cleaning as a first line of defense to prevent the spread of all illnesses, but particularly COVID-19. For the latest recommendations, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>.

The OSBLSW is truly thankful for all our licensees and your impact on Oklahoma’s most vulnerable populations. We do ask that you be patient with our office moving forward. This document and future updates will be posted to the agency website as they become available. As always, please don’t hesitate to contact myself or Jinna Dreessen with any additional questions.

Kind regards and please remain safe,



James M. Marks, LCSW
Executive Director
Oklahoma State Board of Licensed Social Workers