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**AB-456 Healing arts: associate clinical social workers.** (2017-2018)

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**Assembly Bill No. 456**

**CHAPTER 158**

An act to amend Sections 4996.18 and 4996.23 of the Business and Professions Code, relating to healing arts.

[ Approved by Governor August 20, 2018. Filed with Secretary of State August 20, 2018. ]

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

AB 456, Thurmond. Healing arts: associate clinical social workers.

Existing law provides for the licensure and regulation of clinical social workers by the Board of Behavioral Sciences, which is within the Department of Consumer Affairs. Existing law requires an applicant for licensure to comply with specified educational and experience requirements. Existing law requires a person who wishes to be credited with experience toward licensure to register with the board as an associate clinical social worker prior to obtaining that experience.

This bill would revise and recast these provisions. The bill would instead require each applicant to have an active registration with the board as an associate clinical social worker in order to gain hours of supervised experience, except that the bill would authorize preregistered postdegree hours of experience to be credited toward licensure in certain circumstances. The bill would allow for this crediting of hours toward licensure if the applicant applies for the associate registration, the board receives the application within 90 days of the granting of the qualifying master's or doctoral degree, and the board subsequently grants the associate registration. The bill would also require, for applicants completing graduate study on or after January 1, 2020, that their experience be obtained at a workplace that requires completed live scan fingerprinting, and that the applicant provide the board with a copy of a completed live scan form, as specified.

Existing law requires each applicant seeking to qualify for licensure as a clinical social worker to complete 3,200 hours of post-master's degree supervised experience related to the practice of clinical social work and provides that a maximum of 1,200 hours can be in client centered advocacy, consultation, evaluation, research, direct supervisor contact, and workshops, seminars, and training sessions, or conferences.

This bill would reduce the number of hours of post-master's degree supervised experience for licensure as a clinical social worker to 3,000 hours and reduce the maximum hours described above to 1,000 hours.

This bill would incorporate additional changes to Sections 4996.18 and 4996.23 of the Business and Professions Code proposed by AB 93 to be operative only if this bill and AB 93 are enacted and this bill is enacted last.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

**THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:**

**SECTION 1.** Section 4996.18 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

**4996.18.** (a) Except as provided in subdivision (b) of Section 4996.23, each applicant shall have an active registration with the board as an associate clinical social worker in order to gain hours of supervised experience.

(b) An applicant for registration shall satisfy the following requirements:

(1) Possess a master's degree from an accredited school or department of social work.

(2) Have committed no crimes or acts constituting grounds for denial of licensure under Section 480.

(3) Commencing January 1, 2014, have completed training or coursework, which may be embedded within more than one course, in California law and professional ethics for clinical social workers, including instruction in all of the following areas of study:

(A) Contemporary professional ethics and statutes, regulations, and court decisions that delineate the scope of practice of clinical social work.

(B) The therapeutic, clinical, and practical considerations involved in the legal and ethical practice of clinical social work, including, but not limited to, family law.

(C) The current legal patterns and trends in the mental health professions.

(D) The psychotherapist-patient privilege, confidentiality, dangerous patients, and the treatment of minors with and without parental consent.

(E) A recognition and exploration of the relationship between a practitioner's sense of self and human values, and his or her professional behavior and ethics.

(F) Differences in legal and ethical standards for different types of work settings.

(G) Licensing law and process.

(c) An applicant who possesses a master's degree from a school or department of social work that is a candidate for accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education shall be eligible, and shall be required, except as provided in subdivision (b) of Section 4996.23, to register as an associate clinical social worker in order to gain experience toward licensure if the applicant has not committed any crimes or acts that constitute grounds for denial of licensure under Section 480. That applicant shall not, however, be eligible to take the clinical examination until the school or department of social work has received accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education.

(d) All applicants and registrants shall be at all times under the supervision of a supervisor who shall be responsible for ensuring that the extent, kind, and quality of counseling performed is consistent with the training and experience of the person being supervised, and who shall be responsible to the board for compliance with all laws, rules, and regulations governing the practice of clinical social work.

(e) Any experience obtained under the supervision of a spouse or relative by blood or marriage shall not be credited toward the required hours of supervised experience. Any experience obtained under the supervision of a supervisor with whom the applicant has a personal relationship that undermines the authority or effectiveness of the supervision shall not be credited toward the required hours of supervised experience.

(f) An applicant who possesses a master's degree from an accredited school or department of social work shall be able to apply experience the applicant obtained during the time the accredited school or department was in candidacy status by the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education toward the licensure requirements, if the experience meets the requirements of Section 4996.23. This subdivision shall apply retroactively to persons who possess a master's degree from an accredited school or department of social work and who obtained experience during the time the accredited school or department was in candidacy status by the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education.

(g) An applicant for registration or licensure trained in an educational institution outside the United States shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the board that he or she possesses a master's of social work degree that is equivalent to a master's degree issued from a school or department of social work that is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education. These applicants shall provide the board with a comprehensive evaluation of the degree and shall provide any other documentation the board deems necessary. The board has the authority to make the final determination as to whether a degree meets all requirements, including, but not limited to, course requirements regardless of evaluation or accreditation.

(h) A registrant shall not provide clinical social work services to the public for a fee, monetary or otherwise, except as an employee.

(i) A registrant shall inform each client or patient prior to performing any professional services that he or she is unlicensed and is under the supervision of a licensed professional.

**SEC. 1.5.** Section 4996.18 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

**4996.18.** (a) All applicants, except as provided in subdivision (b) of Section 4996.23, shall have an active registration with the board as an associate clinical social worker in order to gain hours of supervised experience.

(b) An applicant for registration shall satisfy the following requirements:

(1) Possess a master's degree from an accredited school or department of social work.

(2) Have committed no crimes or acts constituting grounds for denial of licensure under Section 480.

(3) Have completed training or coursework, which may be embedded within more than one course, in California law and professional ethics for clinical social workers, including instruction in all of the following areas of study:

(A) Contemporary professional ethics and statutes, regulations, and court decisions that delineate the scope of practice of clinical social work.

(B) The therapeutic, clinical, and practical considerations involved in the legal and ethical practice of clinical social work, including, but not limited to, family law.

(C) The current legal patterns and trends in the mental health professions.

(D) The psychotherapist-patient privilege, confidentiality, dangerous patients, and the treatment of minors with and without parental consent.

(E) A recognition and exploration of the relationship between a practitioner's sense of self and human values, and his or her professional behavior and ethics.

(F) Differences in legal and ethical standards for different types of work settings.

(G) Licensing law and process.

(c) An applicant who possesses a master's degree from a school or department of social work that is a candidate for accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education shall be eligible, and shall be required, except as provided in subdivision (b) of Section 4996.23, to register as an associate clinical social worker in order to gain experience toward licensure if the applicant has not committed any crimes or acts that constitute grounds for denial of licensure under Section 480. That applicant shall not, however, be eligible to take the clinical examination until the school or department of social work has received accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education.

(d) An applicant who possesses a master's degree from an accredited school or department of social work shall be able to apply experience the applicant obtained during the time the accredited school or department was in candidacy status by the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education toward the licensure requirements, if the experience meets the requirements of Section 4996.23. This subdivision shall apply retroactively to persons who possess a master's degree from an accredited school or department of social work and who obtained experience during the time the accredited school or department was in candidacy status by the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education.

(e) An applicant for registration or licensure trained in an educational institution outside the United States shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the board that he or she possesses a master's of social work degree that is equivalent to a master's degree issued from a school or department of social work that is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education. These applicants shall provide the board with a comprehensive evaluation of the degree and shall provide any other documentation the board deems necessary. The board has the authority to make the final determination as to whether a degree meets all requirements, including, but not limited to, course requirements regardless of evaluation or accreditation.

(f) All applicants for licensure and registrants shall be at all times under the supervision of a supervisor who shall be responsible for ensuring that the extent, kind, and quality of counseling performed is consistent with the training and experience of the person being supervised, and who shall be responsible to the board for compliance with all laws governing the practice of clinical social work.

(g) All applicants and registrants shall inform each client or patient prior to performing any professional services that he or she is unlicensed and is under the supervision of a licensed professional.

**SEC. 2.** Section 4996.23 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

**4996.23.** (a) To qualify for licensure, each applicant shall complete 3,000 hours of post-master's degree supervised experience related to the practice of clinical social work. Except as provided in subdivision (b), experience shall not be gained until the applicant is registered as an associate clinical social worker.

(b) Preregistered postdegree hours of experience shall be credited toward licensure if all of the following apply:

(1) The registration applicant applies for the associate registration and the board receives the application within 90 days of the granting of the qualifying master's or doctoral degree.

(2) For applicants completing graduate study on or after January 1, 2020, the experience is obtained at a workplace that, prior to the registration applicant gaining supervised experience hours, requires completed live scan fingerprinting. The applicant shall provide the board with a copy of that completed "State of California Request for Live Scan Service" form with his or her application for licensure.

(3) The board subsequently grants the associate registration.

(c) The applicant shall not be employed or volunteer in a private practice until he or she has been issued an associate registration by the board.

(d) The experience shall be as follows:

(1) At least 1,700 hours shall be gained under the supervision of a licensed clinical social worker. The remaining required supervised experience may be gained under the supervision of a licensed mental health professional acceptable to the board as defined by a regulation adopted by the board.

(2) A minimum of 2,000 hours in clinical psychosocial diagnosis, assessment, and treatment, including psychotherapy or counseling.

(3) A maximum of 1,000 hours in client centered advocacy, consultation, evaluation, research, direct supervisor contact, and workshops, seminars, training sessions, or conferences directly related to clinical social work that have been approved by the applicant's supervisor.

(4) Of the 2,000 clinical hours required in paragraph (2), no less than 750 hours shall be face-to-face individual or group psychotherapy provided to clients in the context of clinical social work services.

(5) A minimum of two years of supervised experience is required to be obtained over a period of not less than 104 weeks and shall have been gained within the six years immediately preceding the date on which the application for licensure was filed.

(6) Experience shall not be credited for more than 40 hours in any week.

(e) An individual who submits an application for examination eligibility between January 1, 2016, and December 31, 2020, may alternatively qualify under the experience requirements that were in place on January 1, 2015.

(f) "Supervision" means responsibility for, and control of, the quality of clinical social work services being provided. Consultation or peer discussion shall not be considered to be supervision.

(g) (1) Prior to the commencement of supervision, a supervisor shall comply with all requirements enumerated in Section 1870 of Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations and shall sign under penalty of perjury the "Responsibility Statement for Supervisors of an Associate Clinical Social Worker" form.

(2) Supervised experience shall include at least one hour of direct supervisor contact for a minimum of 104 weeks. For purposes of this subdivision, "one hour of direct supervisor contact" means one hour per week of face-to-face contact on an individual basis or two hours of face-to-face contact in a group conducted within the same week as the hours claimed.

(3) An associate shall receive at least one additional hour of direct supervisor contact for every week in which more than 10 hours of face-to-face psychotherapy is performed in each setting in which experience is gained. No more than six hours of supervision, whether individual or group, shall be credited during any single week.

(4) Supervision shall include at least one hour of direct supervisor contact during each week for which experience is gained in each work setting. Supervision is not required for experience gained attending workshops, seminars, training sessions, or conferences as described in paragraph (3) of subdivision (a).

(5) The six hours of supervision that may be credited during any single week pursuant to paragraph (3) shall apply only to supervision hours gained on or after January 1, 2010.

(6) Group supervision shall be provided in a group of not more than eight supervisees and shall be provided in segments lasting no less than one continuous hour.

(7) Of the 104 weeks of required supervision, 52 weeks shall be individual supervision, and of the 52 weeks of required individual supervision, not less than 13 weeks shall be supervised by a licensed clinical social worker.

(8) Notwithstanding paragraph (2), an associate clinical social worker working for a governmental entity, school, college, or university, or an institution that is both a nonprofit and charitable institution, may obtain the required weekly direct supervisor contact via live two-way videoconferencing. The supervisor shall be responsible for ensuring that client confidentiality is preserved.

(h) The supervisor and the associate shall develop a supervisory plan that describes the goals and objectives of supervision. These goals shall include the ongoing assessment of strengths and limitations and the assurance of practice in accordance with the laws and regulations. The associate shall submit to the board the initial original supervisory plan upon application for licensure.

(i) Experience shall only be gained in a setting that meets both of the following:

(1) Lawfully and regularly provides clinical social work, mental health counseling, or psychotherapy.

(2) Provides oversight to ensure that the associate's work at the setting meets the experience and supervision requirements set forth in this chapter and is within the scope of practice for the profession as defined in Section 4996.9.

(j) Employment in a private practice as defined in subdivision (i) shall not commence until the applicant has been registered as an associate clinical social worker.

(k) A private practice setting is a setting that is owned by a licensed clinical social worker, a licensed marriage and family therapist, a licensed psychologist, a licensed professional clinical counselor, a licensed physician and surgeon, or a professional corporation of any of those licensed professions.

(l) Associates shall not be employed as independent contractors, and shall not gain experience for work performed as an independent contractor, reported on an IRS Form 1099, or both.

(m) If volunteering, the associate shall provide the board with a letter from his or her employer verifying his or her voluntary status upon application for licensure.

(n) If employed, the associate shall provide the board with copies of his or her W-2 tax forms for each year of experience claimed upon application for licensure.

(o) While an associate may be either a paid employee or volunteer, employers are encouraged to provide fair remuneration to associates.

(p) An associate shall not do any of the following:

(1) Receive any remuneration from patients or clients and shall only be paid by his or her employer.

(2) Have any proprietary interest in the employer's business.

(3) Lease or rent space, pay for furnishings, equipment, or supplies, or in any other way pay for the obligations of his or her employer.

(q) An associate, whether employed or volunteering, may obtain supervision from a person not employed by the associate's employer if that person has signed a written agreement with the employer to take supervisory responsibility for the associate's social work services.

(r) Notwithstanding any other law, associates and applicants for examination shall receive a minimum of one hour of supervision per week for each setting in which he or she is working.

**SEC. 2.5.** Section 4996.23 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

**4996.23.** (a) To qualify for licensure, each applicant shall complete 3,000 hours of post-master's degree supervised experience related to the practice of clinical social work. Except as provided in subdivision (b), experience shall not be gained until the applicant is registered as an associate clinical social worker.

(b) Preregistered postdegree hours of experience shall be credited toward licensure if all of the following apply:

(1) The registration applicant applies for the associate registration and the board receives the application within 90 days of the granting of the qualifying master's or doctoral degree.

(2) For applicants completing graduate study on or after January 1, 2020, the experience is obtained at a workplace that, prior to the registration applicant gaining supervised experience hours, requires completed live scan fingerprinting. The applicant shall provide the board with a copy of that completed "State of California Request for Live Scan Service" form with his or her application for licensure.

(3) The board subsequently grants the associate registration.

(c) The applicant shall not be employed or volunteer in a private practice until he or she has been issued an associate registration by the board.

(d) The experience shall be as follows:

(1) At least 1,700 hours shall be gained under the supervision of a licensed clinical social worker. The remaining required supervised experience may be gained under the supervision of a physician and surgeon who is certified in psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, licensed professional clinical counselor, licensed marriage and family therapist, psychologist licensed pursuant to Chapter 6.6 (commencing with Section 2900), or licensed clinical social worker.

(2) A minimum of 2,000 hours in clinical psychosocial diagnosis, assessment, and treatment, including psychotherapy or counseling; however, at least 750 hours shall be face-to-face individual or group psychotherapy provided in the context of clinical social work services.

(3) A maximum of 1,000 hours in client centered advocacy, consultation, evaluation, research, direct supervisor contact, and workshops, seminars, training sessions, or conferences directly related to clinical social work that have been approved by the applicant's supervisor.

(4) A minimum of two years of supervised experience is required to be obtained over a period of not less than 104 weeks and shall have been gained within the six years immediately preceding the date on which the application for licensure was received by the board.

(5) No more than 40 hours of experience may be credited in any seven consecutive days.

(6) For hours gained on or after January 1, 2010, no more than six hours of supervision, whether individual, triadic, or group supervision, shall be credited during any single week.

(e) An individual who submits an application for licensure between January 1, 2016, and December 31, 2020, may alternatively qualify under the experience requirements of this section that were in place on January 1, 2015.

**SEC. 3.** Section 1.5 of this bill incorporates amendments to Section 4996.18 of the Business and Professions Code proposed by both this bill and Assembly Bill 93. That section shall only become operative if (1) both bills are enacted and become effective on or before January 1, 2019, (2) each bill amends Section 4996.18 of the Business and Professions Code, and (3) this bill is enacted after Assembly Bill 93, in which case Section 1 of this bill shall not become operative.

**SEC. 4.** Section 2.5 of this bill incorporates amendments to Section 4996.23 of the Business and Professions Code proposed by both this bill and Assembly Bill 93. That section shall only become operative if (1) both bills are enacted and become effective on or before January 1, 2019, (2) each bill amends Section 4996.23 of the Business and Professions Code, and (3) this bill is enacted after Assembly Bill 93, in which case Section 2 of this bill shall not become operative.