

To House Government Operations Committee
From: Ellis O’Herlihy, National Association of Social Workers-Vermont (NASW-VT)
Date: February 5, 2016
Re: H.562 – Professional Regulations/Social Workers

NASW-VT supports amending H.562 to include language that would prohibit individuals from calling themselves social workers unless they have certain educational credentials related to social work.

H.282 required some state agencies and NASW-VT to come together to address the use of the term “social worker”. The report found that DCF, DVHA, VDH, the Veterans’ Home, and DMH use the term “social worker” to describe certain employment positions. They also discovered that AOE lists “school social workers” as a licensed teacher “endorsement” – they are employed by school districts, but AOE has created and given a title to this group.

The OPR Report Recommendations

“To eliminate confusing or misleading use of the term OPR favors restricting use of the term “social worker” by state agencies. The term “social worker” should be limited to those positions which require social work education acquired in an appropriately accredited social work program.

Current law

Effective until 7/1/17, 26 V.S.A. § 3202(a) states that:

(a) No person shall practice or attempt to practice clinical social work, nor shall any person use in connection with the person's name any letters, words, or insignia indicating or implying that the person is a clinical social worker unless the person is licensed in accordance with this chapter.

Effective on 7/1/17, 26 V.S.A. § 3202(a) states that:

(a) A person shall not practice or attempt to practice licensed independent clinical social work or licensed master's social work, nor shall any person use in connection with the person's name any letters, words, or insignia indicating or implying that the person is a licensed independent clinical social worker or a licensed master's social worker unless the person is licensed in accordance with this chapter.

NASW-VT Proposed Amendment to 26 V.S.A. § 3202

(c) No one shall identify themselves, or hold the job title of social worker without a bachelors (BSW), masters (MSW) or doctorate (DSW) from a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited school of social work.