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To: Board Members **Date:** August 8, 2022
From: Steve Sodergren **Telephone:** (916) 574-7847
Executive Officer
**Subject: The Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Exam Policy
Amendments**

The Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Board of Directors recently revised two examination administration policies. These revisions were made in an effort to increase efficiencies for member boards and streamline the processes for exam candidates. The policies that were revised are as follows:

- Waivers for the 90-day waiting period between exam attempts (90-day waivers)
- Nonstandard testing arrangements for English language learners (ELL)

ASWB has requested the Board to review the policies and confirm how they should process a candidate request for 90-day waivers and for ELL arrangements.

90-Day Waiting Period

Currently, if an examination candidate fails the ASWB Clinical exam, they must wait 90-days before they are able to retest. For some jurisdiction, ASWB offers a waiver of this requirement if candidates can provide evidence that their job is in jeopardy. The Board has not participated in this waiver process. Item #9 of ASWB's examination policy will allow an exam candidate to be granted two waivers per year in specified cases, including when the candidate's score is within 10 points (formerly 5 points) of passing. Candidates no longer must provide evidence of job jeopardy to apply for a waiver. The intent of this revision is to increase candidate opportunity to retest and potentially enter the workforce more quickly.

The purpose of the 90-day waiting period is to ensure that an exam candidate is not exposed to the same exam when retesting. ASWB publishes new exam on a 90-day cycle. Because ASWB has additional examinations developed, they would be able to offer a candidate a different exam within the 90-day waiting period window.

Pertinent to this discussion is the California Code of Regulation, Section 1805.05 (c)-(d) that states: "(c) Waiting periods for national examinations that are accepted by the board shall be determined by that national testing entity. (d) The Board's Executive

Officer may allow for a lesser waiting period, as long as the integrity of the examination or examination security is not compromised.”

Board staff believe that the 90-day waiver would not compromise the integrity of the exam and would benefit the licensee workforce.

English Language Learner Arrangements

ASWB has revised its policy concerning testing arrangement for English language learners. With this revision, if a member Board permits, ASWB will process request and make arrangements for ELL candidates in accordance with the laws and statutes of the individual jurisdiction, including receiving extra time (up to two hours) and the use of two dictionaries (one bilingual word-to-word dictionary and/or one English dictionary). The intent of the revision is to remove the burden of the member board reviewing applications for ELL arrangements, allowing ASWB to manage the process and expedite candidate requests.

Currently, Board staff process applications for ESL testing arrangements. To qualify for consideration, the applicant must submit a request for additional time stating that English is his or her second language, and provide one of the following:

- A Test of English as a Foreign Language, Internet Based Test (TOEFL-iBT) certification score of 85 or below, sent by Educational Testing Service directly to the board.
- Documentation from the qualifying master’s degree program that the program had granted the applicant additional examination time or other allowance due to speaking English as a second language while he or she was enrolled in the program.
- Documentation that the qualifying master’s degree was obtained from an educational institution outside the United States, and that at least fifty percent of the coursework was presented in a language other than English.

If approved, the applicant will be allotted time—and-a-half (1.5x) when taking the required board-administered examination. At this time, Board staff will have to continue to approve ESL arrangements for candidates since this process is established in regulations.

Recommendation

Conduct an open discussion regarding the possible implementation of a 90-day exam waiting period wavier for California ASWB Clinical examination candidates. Direct staff to provide ASWB with a confirmation as to how they should process a candidates request for a 90-day waiver.