

# CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS FOR MICHIGAN SOCIAL WORKERS

Authority: Public Act 368 of 1978, as amended This form is for information only

This document has been developed to explain the requirements and the license renewal process for every social worker licensed to practice in Michigan.

The Michigan Public Health Code and board administrative rules requires every licensed Master's and Bachelor's social worker to complete, during the 3-year period prior to the date of renewal of the license, at least 45 hours of continuing education in courses or programs approved by the Board with at least five of those hours in ethics and at least two hours in pain management.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR RENEWAL**

The continuing education requirements apply to every social worker renewing a Michigan license that held the license for the 3-year period immediately preceding the date of the license renewal. The requirements apply whether or not the social worker is actively engaged in the practice of social work; no one is exempt from this requirement.

Each social worker is required to complete 45 hours with at least five (5) of those hours in ethics and at least two (2) hour in pain and pain symptom management. Continuing education contact hours in pain and symptom management may include, but are not limited to courses in behavior management, psychology of pain, behavior modification, and stress management. Every social worker who is renewing his/her license should retain records documenting the completion of continuing education. Those documents should be retained for a period of 4 years after the renewal of the license.

On December 22, 2016, R 338.2963 was promulgated stating one half of the required continuing education contact hours must be completed in person using live, synchronous contact. The remaining continuing education contact hours may be completed in any other approved format. Since the rules were promulgated mid-license cycle, enforcement of the new continuing education requirements will begin with those renewing in 2020. Prior to 2020, only one hour in pain is required and a maximum of ten (10) hours can be earned in online programs.

**DO NOT SEND THE CONTINUING EDUCATION DOCUMENTS** along with the license renewal application. The Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of Professional Licensing will conduct an audit at the conclusion of the renewal period. Social workers are chosen for audit through an automated random selection process and will be contacted by letter to submit documented evidence of the completion of 45 hours of continuing education credit.

**DO NOT RENEW YOUR LICENSE IF YOU DO NOT HAVE THE REQUIRED 45 HOURS OF CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS.**

A social worker who is unable to provide evidence of completion of the continuing education requirements, when requested, is in violation of the Michigan Public Health Code and subject to one or more of the following possible license sanctions: reprimand, probation, denial, suspension, revocation, limitation, restitution, and fine.

Accredited sponsors are required to provide attendance certificates that indicate name of licensee, program dates and number of designated hours. Further information about programs with accredited sponsorship may be obtained by contacting the accredited sponsor. "Contact hour" is the same as one 50-60 minute or (1) credit hour.

## **REQUIREMENT FOR RELICENSURE**

**“Relicensure” means the granting of a license to a person whose license has lapsed for failure to renew the license within 60 days after the expiration date.**

Social workers applying for relicensure pursuant to R338.2945 or R338.2955 must complete 45 HOURS OF CONTINUING EDUCATION IN PROGRAMS APPROVED BY THE BOARD THAT HAVE BEEN EARNED WITHIN THE 3-YEAR PERIOD IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING THE DATE OF THE APPLICATION.

Submit an official transcript or certification of completion showing the licensee’s name, number of credits earned, approved sponsor’s name or name of the organization that approved the program, and the date(s) on which the program was held or completed.

## **RENEWAL PROCEDURES**

Social worker licenses expire every 3 years on April 30. Submission of the renewal application certifies that the requirements are met. If the renewal requirements have not been completed, the renewal application should not be submitted. Licenses can be renewed during the sixty-day grace period after completion of continuing education requirements, with the renewal fee and the additional \$20.00 late fee. If a licensee would like to apply for a waiver of education requirements, an application should be made after the licensee receives the renewal application in early March but before the license expires on April 30. Licensees who have not been granted waivers should allow their licenses to expire. Application for relicensure may be made upon completion of the 45-hour requirement within the 3-year period immediately preceding the date of the application for relicensure if license has been expired for no more than 3 years.

## **CONTINUING EDUCATION WAIVERS**

The Michigan Public Health Code authorizes the Board of Social Work to waive the continuing education requirements for a license renewal applicant if, upon written application, the Board finds the failure of the licensee to attend the required Board-approved courses or programs was due to the licensee’s disability, military service, absence from the continental United States, or a circumstance beyond the control of the licensee which the Board considers good and sufficient. Pursuant to this authority, the Board has promulgated guidelines that set forth the policy that the Board will follow in granting a waiver. The guidelines provide for the following:

**MILITARY SERVICE:** The licensee shall have been practicing Social Work while in active service of the United States, shall have been licensed at the time of induction or entering into service, and shall have requested that his or her license be placed in military status to continue in effect without payment of the license renewal fee pursuant to Section 16196 of the Public Health Code.

**ABSENCE FROM THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES:** The licensee shall establish that Board-approved educational programs were not available within a reasonable distance from which the licensee was located and the licensee shall provide evidence of attendance at educational programs that substantially meet the requirements for approval by the Board.

**OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND LICENSEE’S CONTROL:** For circumstances, other than disability, military service, or absence from the continental United States, the licensee shall submit compelling evidence that the circumstances were good and sufficient for a waiver of the requirements.

If the Board finds that any of the conditions for waiving the requirements have been met, the number of hours waived shall be proportional to the length of time the licensee was temporarily disabled, in active military service, outside the continental United States, or involved in circumstances beyond the licensee’s

control. The Board will not waive the requirements prospectively, nor will the requirements be waived for a licensee whose circumstances changed in time to reasonably allow the licensee to complete all or part of the requirements before license renewal.

To summarize:

- All Michigan licensed Master’s and Bachelor’s Social Workers must complete 45 hours of Board approved continuing education with at least five (5) contact hours in ethics, and two (2) contact hour in pain and pain symptom management. Continuing education contact hours in pain and pain symptom management may include, but are not limited to courses in behavior management, psychology of pain, behavior modification, and stress management.
- Submission of the renewal application and fee is considered a statement that the CE requirement has been met.
- Failure to complete the CE requirement is considered a violation of the Public Health Code.

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