

**Department of Planning and Budget**  
**2025 General Assembly Session**  
**State Fiscal Impact Statement**

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**ORIGINAL**

**Bill Number:** HB1897 H1

**Patron:** Willett

**Bill Title:** Board of Social Work; Board of Counseling; master's social worker; scope of practice; regulations.

**Bill Summary:** Expands the scope of practice of master’s social workers to allow the provision of clinical services under the supervision of a licensed clinical social worker and directs the Board of Social Work to promulgate regulations reflecting this provision. The bill also directs the Board of Counseling to amend its regulations relating to the registration of baccalaureate social workers as qualified mental health professionals to allow a more streamlined registration pathway for such social workers and to increase the number of registered qualified mental health professionals in the Commonwealth. The substitute bill also requires the Department of Medical Assistance Services and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services to deem services provided by a licensed baccalaureate social worker to be equivalent to the services provided by a qualified mental health professional-trainee and to reimburse baccalaureate social workers for services provided at a comparable rate to such trainees.

**Budget Amendment Necessary:** No

**Items Impacted:** n/a

**Explanation:** Any fiscal impacts are minimal and can be absorbed with existing resources. This bill does not require that language updates be made to the proposed Appropriation Act.

**Fiscal Summary:** Any fiscal impacts resulting from this bill are minimal and can be absorbed with existing resources.

**Fiscal Analysis:** This bill requires the Board of Social Work to promulgate new regulations reflecting that a master’s social worker is able to provide clinical services under the supervision of a licensed clinical social worker. The bill also requires the Board of Counseling to amend existing regulations in order to streamline the pathway for baccalaureate social workers to become qualified mental health professionals as defined by the Board. Both the Board of Social Work and the Board of Counseling may experience minor cost impacts resulting from promulgating new regulations or amending existing regulations. It is expected that the costs to these boards can be absorbed through existing resources.

This bill also requires the Board of Medical Assistance Services and the Board of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (referred to in the bill text as “Departments”—see “Other” section below) to amend regulations pertaining to services provided by licensed baccalaureate social workers and their eligibility for reimbursement. It is expected that any costs associated with amending regulations can be absorbed with existing resources.

Finally, this bill requires the Department for Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) and the Department for Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to reimburse baccalaureate social workers (BSWs) for

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services provided at a comparable rate to that which is provided to qualified mental health professional-trainees, subject to receiving proper federal authority and updating existing regulations. DMAS estimates that the provisions of this bill would allow fewer than 300 individuals with a B.S.W. to be reimbursed for services that are currently provided by qualified mental health professional-trainees. The proposal is not expected to increase the amount or cost of medical assistance services being provided by DMAS. As such, this bill is not expected to have any significant impact to agency costs. Similarly, this bill is not expected to increase the amount or cost of services provided by DBHDS such that it is expected to have a significant impact to agency costs.

**Other:** There is a technical language change needed for the substitute bill. The Department of Medical Assistance Services and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services do not possess the authority to amend regulations as required by the bill; rather, it is the Board of Medical Assistance Services and the Board of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services that oversee the regulatory process for these agencies. On line 66, strike the word "Department" before the phrase "Department of Medical Assistance Services" and replace it with the word "Board"; also on line 66, strike the word "Department" before the phrase "Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services" and replace it with the word "Board."