



New York State Society for Clinical Social Work, Inc.

Tel: (800) 288-4279; Email: info.nysscsw@gmail.com; Fax: (718) 785-9582

Website: www.nysscsw.org; Facebook: www.facebook.com/NYSSCSW/info

Memorandum in Support of SB5960/AB8140

Dear Governor Cuomo,

I'm writing today, on behalf of the New York State Society for Clinical Social Work regarding SB 5960 / AB8140, an act to amend the social services law, in relation to making care and services provided by mental health providers licensed under Article 163 of the Education law, eligible for coverage under the Medicaid program. *Please sign this legislation into law* to expand Medicaid mental health services to the clinicians best trained to deal with their psychosocial problems.

Licensed Clinical Social Workers are essential to a variety of client-centered settings, including community mental health centers, hospitals, substance use treatment and recovery programs, schools, primary health care centers, child welfare agencies, aging services, employee assistance programs, and private practice settings.

Licensed Clinical Social Work has a primary focus on the emotional, and mental health of individuals, couples, families, and groups and by definition, includes the scope of practice of the LMSW, diagnosis of mental, emotional, behavioral, addictive and developmental disorders and disabilities, the development and implementation of appropriate assessment-based treatment plans; and the provision of crisis oriented psychotherapy, including brief, short-term and long-term psychotherapy and psychotherapeutic treatment. In addition, given their unique training, LCSWs are the only licensed mental health professionals that assess the person-in-environment, a practice-guiding principle that highlights the importance of understanding an individual and individual behavior in light of the environmental contexts in which that person lives and acts (family finances, connections, living situation, religion, employment, etc.).

Further, Article 163 of the Education Law authorizes a qualified LCSW to practice mental health counseling, marriage and family therapy, creative arts therapy or psychoanalysis. Given the breadth of such a scope, LCSW's are a vital component of the community mental health system and as such, should be utilized to broaden access to crucial mental health services.

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any follow up questions, I can be reached at mwineburgh@aol.com.

Sincerely,

Marsha Wineburgh, DSW, LCSW-R

Legislative Chair, NSSCSW