

ADVANCING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH IN MISSOURI: *NASW LEAD DAY KEY BILLS*

SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION REFORM

- NASW Missouri Chapter supports modifying the requirements for social work supervisors to help bring more social workers into the profession.
- Missouri has a severe shortage of behavioral health professionals, increasing travel and wait times for patients.
- Most types of social workers, including licensed clinical social workers, require 3,000 hours of supervised work as part of the licensure process.
- Missouri has one of the longest waiting periods for social workers to become supervisors. This creates a limitation on the number of supervisors in the state who can help new clinicians enter the field.
- In Missouri, to become a social work supervisor, you must practice for at least 5 years. This makes us one of only four states that require more than three years.
- This legislation allows social workers to supervise after three years of practice. It does not change any other licensure or educational requirements.
- This is a simple change to boost the number of supervisors in the state who can help more social workers enter the profession to serve Missourians.
- SB 1092, sponsored by Senator Patty Lewis, passed the Senate and has been heard in the House Emerging Issues Committee. HB 1963, sponsored by Representative Tara Peters, passed the House and was referred to the Senate Emerging Issues Committee.

PRIOR AUTHORIZATION REFORM

- NASW Missouri Chapter supports legislation to streamline the prior authorization process to reduce barriers and delays impacting patients' access to care.
- This language creates a pathway for providers to be exempt from prior authorization if they meet a 90% approval threshold.
- This exemption would be reevaluated for each twelve-month period.

- Six states have passed a version of this prior authorization reform: Arkansas, Colorado, Louisiana, Texas, West Virginia, and Wyoming.
- A 2018 article found that 26% of physicians stated they waited 3+ business days on average to receive prior authorization decisions.
- According to the American Medical Association, prior authorizations result in 94% of patients experiencing delays in care and 78% abandoning treatment altogether.
- Prior authorization can create barriers to and delays in patient care. These administrative hurdles also increase costs for providers.
- HB 3010, sponsored by Representative Melanie Stinnett, passed the House and was referred to the Senate Insurance Committee.

AI MENTAL HEALTH PROTECTIONS

- NASW Missouri Chapter supports legislation preventing AI models from falsely advertising themselves as mental health professionals.
- These bills prohibit AI models from advertising that they can act as mental health professionals or that they can provide therapy services.
- The penalty for non-compliance is \$10,000 for the first violation and \$20,000 thereafter, enforced by the Attorney General.
- AI models have been shown to provide faulty information or reinforce negative thinking. There are also insufficient privacy guardrails.
- There are several ongoing lawsuits alleging that AI models encouraged or contributed to suicides.
- Around one in eight adolescents and young adults in the United States use AI chatbots for mental health advice, according to a 2025 study published in JAMA.
- These bills provide basic consumer protections for how AI models advertise themselves to Missourians.
- SB 1444, sponsored by Senator Patty Lewis, has passed the Senate General Laws Committee. HB 2372, sponsored by Representative Tara Peters, is a healthcare omnibus bill that includes this language. It passed the House and was heard in the Senate Seniors, Families, and Health Committee.