



**Connecticut Department of Public Health**

**Testimony Presented Before the Committee on Public Health**

**February 28, 2014**

**Commissioner Jewel Mullen, MD, MPH, MPA  
860-509-7101**

**Senate Bill #124 - An Act Concerning Licensure Requirements for Master Social Workers**

The Department of Public Health provides the following comments regarding SB 124:

Current licensure requirements for master's as well as clinical level social workers require candidates to have graduated from a social work program that is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. The proposed bill would allow graduates from newly established master's degree social work programs that are in candidacy status but have not yet achieved accreditation with the Council on Social Work Education to qualify for licensure.

Generally speaking, statutes governing professional licensure for health practitioners do not recognize educational programs that are in candidacy status with an accreditation agency. If a program applies for accreditation and it is not granted, graduates who were licensed based on candidacy status will not have met the same rigorous standards other applicants are required to meet. The master's degree that qualifies an applicant for licensure as a master's level social worker is the same degree that will be used to qualify the applicant for a clinical social worker license should they choose to apply for that advanced licensure.

The Department is aware that accreditation agencies, including the Council on Social Work Education, require programs in candidacy status to graduate a class before accreditation is granted. In our experience, when programs are successful in meeting accreditation standards, these accrediting agencies retroactively grant accreditation effective as of the date of the first graduating class so as not to negatively impact students who enroll or the program's ability to recruit students. Under the existing statute, candidates from the first graduating class of a new social work education program would be eligible to sit for the licensure examination upon the program receiving notification that accreditation is granted.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.