

STATE OF NEVADA BOARD OF EXAMINERS FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

MARCH 24, 1998

ADVISORY OPINION NO. 7

QUESTION

Whether the "social work" license required for the filing of an application, certification and medical clearance for emergency admission of an allegedly mentally ill person to a mental facility on form "legal 97" is within the scope of practice of a licensed clinical social worker exclusively.

ANALYSIS


Form 97 requires the signature of a competent mental health professional as certification and commitment of a mentally ill person pursuant to NRS 433A.120 through 433A.330. The application may be signed by a Nevada licensed physician, psychologist, social worker, registered nurse, accredited agent of the Department of Human Resources, a peace officer or a marriage and family therapist. The form also requires the certification by a licensed psychologist, psychiatrist or other physician when none is available.

The authorizing statute for the licensure of social workers by the State of Nevada Board of Examiners for Social Work, NRS chapter 641B, distinguishes between "social work" and "clinical social work". Clinical social work includes the application of psychotherapeutic method and techniques to persons, families and groups to help in the diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional conditions pursuant to NRS 641B.030(3). Social work, on the other hand, includes the assistance toward restoring and enhancing physical, social and economic functioning pursuant to NRS 641B.030(2).

The scope of practice of the licensed clinical social worker, therefor, including the assessment and diagnosis of mental health conditions, are prerequisite to filing an application for emergency commitment to a mental facility.

CONCLUSION

The filing of an application for the emergency admission of a person to a mental facility who presents a clear and present danger to himself or others pursuant to NRS 433A.120 through 433A.330 falls within the scope of practice of a licensed clinical social worker and not any other form of social work licensure.

Signed 
President, State of Nevada Board of Examiners for
Social Workers

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Reaffirmed January 12, 2001