



Travels and triumphs



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ASWB Chief Executive Officer

I am finding my ASWB position as CEO to be quite exciting! Much of my work revolves around travel and meetings to raise awareness of ASWB and the role of regulation in public protection. Thank goodness I enjoy traveling to and taking part in challenging, important, and strategic meetings. I truly appreciate that ASWB is invited to participate when professional regulation of social work practice is being discussed. As the organization representing the jurisdictional social work regulatory boards and colleges, ASWB should and will be there. The good news is that we are being included and we are being heard.

A second awareness is that I travel between two distinct professions—social work and professional regulation. These professions have different missions, yet both are interconnected and interrelated through the shared values of public protection, social justice, service, integrity, and competence.

Simply stated, the primary goal of social work is to help people in need and to address social problems. The primary responsibility of professional regulation is to protect the public from harm by establishing minimum standards of competence for social work professionals and offering legal recourse if harm occurs. Coincidentally,

protecting the public also results in protecting the title and practice of social workers, which is a major benefit to the profession.

The meetings I have attended have included social work educators, practitioners, and regulators—all essential partners in the social work regulatory community. Working together, we are expanding the conversation about the benefits of regulation and licensure. Whether talking to deans and directors of social work programs or to social work practitioners, my role in the conversation has been to provide insight about ways that regulation adds value and is connected to social work values and ethics.

As part of this outreach, I have traveled some major miles with ASWB President Dorinda Noble to share the benefits of ASWB's Path to Licensure campaign. We have spread the word about the campaign to social work educators at the March Baccalaureate Program Directors (BPD) Conference in Louisville, Kentucky, and at the April National Association of Deans and Directors (NADD) Conference in Asheville, North Carolina. The campaign is aimed at strengthening student and faculty knowledge of licensure and its role in developing accountability for safe, competent, and ethical practice. Another benefit for educators is receiving up-to-date

information about regulation in their particular jurisdiction.

The next stop on the campaign's trail will be at ASWB's Spring Education Conference in St. Louis. Social work educators from Missouri and Kansas will attend a luncheon and learn about the program from the ASWB Board and staff. Also attending will be our special guests, Darla Spence Coffey, president and CEO of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), and Angelo McClain, CEO of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). These leaders in the worlds of education and practice have become more than our colleagues in the Path to Licensure campaign—they are our partners in this exciting and new initiative.

While I was at the BPD meeting, I attended two sessions sponsored by ACOSA, the Association for Community Organization and Social Administration. In early April, I joined the leaders of NASW and CSWE in Washington, D.C., for a meeting with ACOSA's special commission, launched to bolster macro practice in social work. Lively discussion ensued, with opportunities to correct misinformation and misperceptions. By the end of the meeting, we had a commitment to move forward with areas of commonality and a clearer understanding that licensing should and does embrace the full breadth and richness of all social work practice.

Following the Spring Education Meeting, my travels will take me north to St. Catherines, Ontario,

with ASWB Executive Vice President Dwight Hymans. We are excited that ASWB has been invited to attend the 2014 National Joint Social Work Conference/Conference nationale conjointe de travail social sponsored by the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) and the Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE). We are presenting "Getting to Consensus on Competency to Practice" with Claude Leblond, president, l'Ordre des travailleurs sociaux et des thérapeutes conjugaux et familiaux du Québec, and John Mayr, registrar, British Columbia College of Social Workers.

Our team of regulation experts will outline for Canadian social work educators how different types of assessment instruments are used to determine the minimal level of competency required for safe and ethical practice. Attendees will see the similarities and uniqueness among the instruments, as well as the competency profiles and practice standards that are derived from the analysis. Fred Phelps, president of CASW, assisted in bringing ASWB and our Canadian leaders to this annual meeting of Canadian social work educators and practitioners.

As you can see, my travels since the beginning of the year are taking me far and wide. The response to ASWB's outreach efforts has been positive and rewarding. Being included at the table with social work educators and practitioners has encouraged collaboration on multiple levels, resulting in clarification, understanding, and good will. Triumphs, indeed.