



Technology standards take life as a resource for managing social work practice mobility

An electronic version of the [Model Regulatory Standards for Technology and Social Work Practice](#) is maintained on the ASWB website.

Social work practice using technology reaches across jurisdictional boundaries and poses challenges for practitioners and regulators alike. To say that the publication of the Model Regulatory Standards for Technology and Social Work was met with a great deal of interest would be an

understatement. Social work practitioners, educators, and regulators were requesting the document even before the final version had been posted to the ASWB website. It had been ten years since the first practice standards for technology were written, as a joint effort between ASWB and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW).



International Technology Task Force members gather in front of the graphic recording of Social Work in a Digital Age, the keynote address given by Frederic Reamer, Ph.D., at ASWB's 2015 Spring Education Meeting. From left: ASWB CEO Mary Jo Monahan; Jo Ann Regan, Council on Social Work Education (CSWE); Mirean Coleman, National Association of Social Workers (NASW); Annette Johns (NL), Canadian Association of Social Workers; chair Frederic Reamer, Rhode Island College School of Social Work; Paul Freddolino, CSWE; Dawn Hobby, NASW; and Steven Pharris (TN), ASWB Board of Directors. Inset: Rhian Williams, Care Council for Wales. Not shown: M. Jenise Comer (MO), ASWB Board of Directors; ASWB Executive Vice President Dwight Hymans; ASWB Executive Services Manager Melissa Ryder; Rachel Birnbaum, Canadian Council of Social Work Regulators; Gloria Kirwan, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland; and Sean McKinley, New Zealand Social Workers Registration Board.

A lot had happened in the world of digital and electronic technology in that time—and more practitioners had begun embracing technology to connect with clients. The goal of the International Technology Task Force, which ASWB convened in 2013, was to develop a set of guidelines, or standards, that would become a resource both for regulators considering amendments to rules and regulations related to electronic social work services, and for the profession as ASWB and NASW considered updating the 2005 practice standards.

Now that the International Technology Task Force has completed its work, the next steps in the evolution of the technology standards are ready to get under way.

This summer, the ASWB Regulation and Standards (RAS) Committee will complete its

comprehensive three-year review of the Model Social Work Practice Act, a resource to facilitate greater standardization of terminology and regulation across all jurisdictions that contains the text of a sample regulatory statute. The RAS Committee will incorporate the model regulatory technology standards into the relevant sections of the model law. All changes will then be brought before the delegate assembly in November at the 2015 annual meeting to be voted on for adoption.

The model regulatory standards will also help shape practice standards for use in the United States. ASWB will be partnering with NASW and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) to

update the 2005 standards. At the invitation of NASW CEO Angelo McClain, the Clinical Social Work Association (CSWA) will become the fourth member of this working group. The practice standards will be published by NASW.

“We look forward to working with NASW, CSWE, and CSWA to develop practice standards that will serve as a guide for social workers who choose to provide electronic social work services,” said ASWB CEO Mary Jo Monahan. “Finding ways to allow the practitioner to serve clients using technology must be done in a way that protects the public while offering mobility of practice. This collaboration ensures that all interests will be represented in the process.”

The International Technology Task Force included regulators, practitioners, and educators from North America, Ireland, Wales, and New Zealand. As a thank you for their work and to celebrate their accomplishment, the task force members were invited to attend ASWB’s Spring Education Meeting. This was the first time that the group met in person. All task force working meetings were held virtually, using technology to cross international barriers of time and distance.