



Association of Social Work Boards

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

*President*

**Harold Dean**, MSW, LCSW, OSW-C  
Arkansas

*Past President*

**Timothy Martel Brown**, MSW, LCSW, ACSW  
Texas

*Secretary*

**Lisa Crockwell**, MSW, RSW  
Newfoundland and Labrador

*Treasurer*

**Brian Philson**, LMSW, ACSW  
Michigan

*Directors at Large*

**Thomas H. Brooks**  
Minnesota

**Deborah Jones**, MSW, RCSW  
British Columbia

**Kim Madsen**  
California

**Kenneth Middlebrooks**  
Minnesota

**Roxroy A. Reid**, MSW, Ph.D., LCSW  
New Mexico

**Beatrice Traub-Werner**, MSW, RSW  
Ontario

**Kate Zacher-Pate**, BA, LSW  
Minnesota

*Chief Executive Officer*

**Dwight J. Hymans**, MSW, LCSW, ACSW

17126 Mountain Run Vista Ct.  
Culpeper, VA 22701

t / 800.225.6880  
f / 540.829.0562  
info@aswb.org

aswb.org

August 6, 2020

Dear Social Work Community:

ASWB staff have heard from aspiring social workers who are understandably frustrated at testing delays caused by government-ordered shutdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic. With news proliferating of other professions making online exams available, we are also hearing the call urging ASWB to follow suit and offer the social work licensing exams online.

While the move to online exam administration may seem to be a simple transition, it is not. Other professions are reporting significant challenges. The American Board of Surgery's attempt met with [disastrous results](#), and the whole exam had to be canceled. The success of a virtual administration of the bar exam remains unknown. Because the online bar exam will be abbreviated, scores earned will not be eligible to be transferred [according to the National Conference of Bar Examiners](#).

ASWB has carefully considered offering the licensing exams online and determined at this time that is not in the best interests of public protection, candidates, or the regulatory boards we serve for the following reasons.

**Validity and reliability of the exam**

ASWB must adhere to strict industry standards to ensure validity, reliability, and legal defensibility on behalf of the licensing boards granting an applicant a license to practice social work. At this time, no online testing process provides the level of consistency and security required for administration of ASWB's licensing exams.

**Equitable delivery to all test-takers**

Online testing risks service interruptions and cannot offer the same level of consistent testing conditions such as a quiet environment, adequate and uniform space and lighting, and appropriate computer equipment.

**Concern for candidates requiring nonstandard testing arrangements**

Online testing presents challenges for candidates with qualified disabilities or other health conditions who require nonstandard testing arrangements. Arrangements such as readers or a distraction-free environment would require alternative testing arrangements that might not be available.

**Need for highest security**

The online testing options that are currently available, with or without proctoring, are designed for credentialing exams used in the certification industry. These tests have different standards for security and consistency compared to the standards required for high-stakes licensing exams like those administered by ASWB.

We understand that our decision will not be the answer that many hoped for. We will continue to explore options and gather information as we determine the best way to maintain exam validity and address the concerns expressed by our candidate population.

Dwight J. Hymans, MSW, LCSW  
ASWB Chief Executive Officer

Harold Dean, MSW, LCSW, OSW-C  
ASWB Board President