

I am a constituent and a Licensed Master Social worker with numerous years of experience as a social worker in various settings. My earliest years were in hospitals and nursing homes in various capacities including Director of Social Work at a primary care facility. I've also had the misfortune of being a patient in several of these venues

My experiences taught me that the social work profession is totally undervalued, under appreciated and underutilized to the detriment of patients as well as the facility as a whole.

After completing my BSW, I worked in a primary care facility where I was instrumental in improving the facility's bottom line. Using my listening and problem solving skills, I developed a protocol to reduce the length of patients' hospital days and I resolved a billing problem with the Lifeline program that was causing the hospital to lose money.

As the sole Social worker in a small primary care facility, I developed a protocol that required a social worker to complete a psycho/social assessment on every new patient and engage family members when appropriate. I arranged for multi discipline group meetings to develop a holistic plan of care and to utilize family and community services to expedite a safe and early discharge.

I was fortunate in those early days to have been given a free rein that allowed me to explore and develop my skills, education and training.

The current ratio of patients to social workers is, in my opinion, a detriment to the overall health care system as well as to individual patient care and family systems. It is, in my opinion, an insult to the social work profession.

I hope you will support SB 1057 and, I hope I have provided a more positive view of the profession that I love.

Elaine Wilkinson