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Social Work Hospice + Palliative Care Network

The Social Work Hospice and Palliative Care Network (SWHPN) opposes the removal of explicit anti-racist and anti-oppressive requirements from the Council on Social Work Education's draft 2029 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) and calls on CSWE to restore them. SWHPN's vision is care that is accountable to historical harms. Our mission commits us to equity and anti-racism. We cannot hold to either while the standards that educate social workers stop requiring students to demonstrate them.

What the draft does:

Draft 1 replaces the anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion competency with person-in-environment. No assessed behavior names racism or oppression. The policy competency's behaviors ask students only to understand how to influence policy, where the 2022 standards required them to advocate for policies that advance racial justice. The draft also removes the standards that required programs to show and assess continuous anti-racism efforts in their curriculum.

The political reality:

CSWE says state laws drove the change: 19 states have enacted ADEI restrictions, covering about 40 percent of programs, and legislation restricting DEI has been introduced or passed in 30 states. The wider context includes a 2025 executive order directing the Department of Education to act against accreditors

engaged in what it calls unlawful DEI discrimination, which CSWE says does not apply to it directly, and a May 2026 demand from an advocacy group that CSWE remove all anti-racism and DEI references. The draft that followed removed that language from the assessed behaviors.

Standards for social work education are being rewritten under political pressure. Pressure explains a decision. It does not justify one.

There was another option. CSWE already lets programs in restricted states adapt the 2022 language. That protects those programs without changing the standard for the other 60 percent.

Why it matters in hospice and palliative care:

Hospice use differs by race and ethnicity: in 2024, 55.8 percent of White Medicare decedents used hospice, compared with about 40 percent of Black, Hispanic, and Native American decedents and 39.4 percent of Asian American decedents (National Alliance for Care at Home, 2025). Social workers must be educated to address it.

What we ask:

Restore a named anti-racist and anti-oppressive behavior, restore a standard requiring programs to assess anti-racism efforts, restore advocacy as a demonstrated behavior, and publish the reasoning for a national change.

CSWE is accepting comments until 11:59 p.m. ET on November 20 at cswe.org/2029-epas.

We urge members, educators, students, and the public to read the draft and comment.

Questions?

Contact SWHPN Board leadership at board@swhpn.org

Member Guide:

How You Can Advocate

- Comment deadline, November 20 at 11:59 p.m. ET.
- Draft and survey: cswe.org/2029-epas
- CSWE says it takes the draft down when comment closes, so save a copy now.

How:

Read the draft, set aside time for the survey, and comment as an individual, stating your role and setting. Do not claim to speak for SWHPN. Comment as you judge safe in your state and workplace.

Competency or standard and change with comments you can adapt:

Competency 3: ADEI competency replaced by person-in-environment; no behavior names racism or oppression

- **Comment you can adopt:** "Person-in-environment belongs in the standards. It does not replace a requirement that students show they can identify and address racism and oppression. Please restore it as a named, assessed behavior."

Competency 5: Behaviors ask students to "understand" how to influence policy; 2022 required them to advocate

- **Comment you can adopt:** "Understanding is a lower standard than practice. Please restore advocacy as a behavior students must practice."

Competency 8: Behavior on negotiating, mediating, and advocating replaced by transitions and endings

- **Comment you can adopt:** "Transitions and endings matter in hospice and palliative care. Add them, and keep advocacy for clients."

Competencies 4 and 9: Anti-racist perspective removed from research and evaluation

- **Comment you can adopt:** "Please restore the anti-racist perspective in research and evaluation, and state it as a behavior programs must assess."

Competency 2: Renamed Dignity, Respect, and Justice for All

- **Comment you can adopt:** "Please restore explicit language on racial, economic, and environmental justice."

Standards 2.0 and 5.0.2 (2022): Anti-racism efforts in the curriculum and their assessment, with no equivalent in Draft 1

- **Comment you can adopt:** "Please restore a standard requiring programs to engage in and assess anti-racism efforts in the curriculum and learning environment."

Support what works. The draft adds interprofessional collaboration, spiritual factors, a technology competency, and field placement responsibilities. Saying so makes your other comments more credible.

Make it count. Say what you want changed and where. Describe the draft accurately. Add one or two sentences from your own practice, with no patient-identifying information. Keep each comment to two to four sentences.

Questions? Contact SWHPN Board leadership at board@swhpn.org

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