

STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

IN THE MATTER OF THE PROPOSED
AMENDMENT OF DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC WELFARE RULE 4
(12 MCAR 2.004) STANDARDS
FOR THE LICENSING OF PRIVATE
CHILD-CARING OR PLACING AGENCIES

STATEMENT OF NEED
AND REASONABLENESS

A. Applicability. The present Department of Public Welfare Rule 4 (12 MCAR 2.004) requires that a case-work supervisor in a child-caring or placing agency shall be a graduate of an accredited school of social work or have successfully completed two years in such a school. A question has been raised as to what level of degree this means. At the time the rule was written there was no confusion as to the requirement because social work education programs were available only at the master's level. However, in the last 10 or 12 years several institutions have begun offering social work as a major for a bachelor's degree. Thus, what may have been clear at one time, is no longer so obvious.

The Department has decided to clarify the requirement of part D. 6. b. of 12 MCAR 2.004 by proposing an amendment that will make specific the requirement that the case-work supervisor of a child-caring or placing agency shall hold a master's degree in social work from an accredited school of social work.

The master of social work programs stresses a common base of general knowledge and skills with concentration at the second level in clinical practice or administration and planning. The degree holder must have completed a sequence of course work at the graduate level in human growth and development, principles of social casework, interviewing and principles of family therapy. The typical degree program also includes field instruction that is primarily focused on direct service to individuals, families and small groups. A master's degree program must be completed within a prescribed period of time in order to preserve the continuity of the program.

The requirement for a master's degree for case-work supervisors developed because of the complex nature of child-caring and child-placing agencies. Agencies licensed under the provisions of Rule 4 provide care and supervision to children who may, besides requiring basic care, exhibit behavioral and emotional problems. The supervision and direction of the staff who provide the care and service to these children and their families is of extreme importance so that proper placement may be made, suitable treatment plans developed and continuity of care preserved. The master's of social work degree, through the specialized curriculum and field instruction is designed to prepare individuals for supervisory positions.

Child-caring and placing agencies licensed under Rule 4 provide social case work services to parents, foster parents and children, select and recommend for licensing foster homes and place children for adoption. These are complex and sensitive processes which require that difficult judgments about such matters as the suitability of a home for a foster care license or the appropriateness of a family for an adoption placement be made by the line staff who are required only to be college graduates. Their recommendations must be carefully reviewed by the agency case-work supervisor. The requirement of a master's degree for the case-work supervisor will help ensure that the decisions that are made will be in the best interests of the children, parents and foster parents.

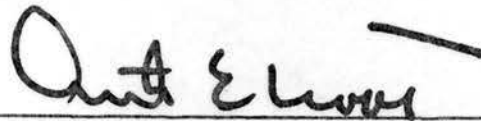
It is acknowledged that it is sometimes difficult to obtain qualified personnel in some areas of the state. However, the rule does not require that all of the professional staff of the agency hold a master's degree in social work. It only requires that the case-work supervisor have such a degree. The director of the agency may be in an administrative position which does not require an advanced degree. For the case-work supervisor, who is more directly involved in the agency's work with children and their parents, it is essential that the individual have the necessary advanced training so that a high level of supervision be maintained.

It is therefore reasonable to require that the case-work supervisor hold a master's degree from an accredited school of social work.

The agencies' authority to adopt the proposed rule is contained in Minn. Stat. § 245.802.

Testimony by expert witnesses will be provided by Roger W. Toogood, Executive Director, Children's Home Society of Minnesota who will discuss the importance of professionally trained staff in providing supervision in a child-caring placing agency and Patricia Eldridge, Supervisor of Adoptions, Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota, who will discuss the need for competent, trained supervision in an agency engaged in placing children for adoption and counseling parents engaged in the adoption process.

Dated: June 3, 1982



Arthur E. Noot
Commissioner of Public Welfare