

## **PRESS RELEASE**

The Task Force on Social Work Licensing of the National Association of Deans/Directors (NADD) of Social Work Programs, met on September 16th in Chicago to develop an action plan in relation to the data released on pass/fail rates on the national licensing exam. The Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB), the vendors of the exam used in all 50 states, released data on August 5<sup>th</sup> demonstrating racial and ethnic disparities in outcomes (pass rates), most particularly for Black and Latino test-takers. NADD, along with a number of other social work organizations, practitioners, and advocates are calling for rapid action to address the noted disparities.

“The Task Force members believe that licensing equity is a social justice issue that is imperative to address for the life of the profession and the communities we serve” said Task Force Co-Chairs Tamara Davis (Indiana University) and Sheryl Kubiak (Wayne State University). Therefore, while NADD continues to ask ASWB to partner with them to discuss and develop modifications in the exam process and reduce the financial burden on test-takers, the NADD Task Force is planning several simultaneous actions. The Task Force will expand its membership to additional voices and relevant parties to form two work groups. The first work group will create a ‘toolkit’ of resources focused on organizing state-level stakeholders to examine potential revisions to regulations aimed at increasing the numbers and diversity of social workers nationally. The second work group will focus on exploring alternative pathways to licensure.

“NADD has an important role in advocating for the students who attend our universities and generally go into debt to get a social work degree. That there may be bias in a licensing exam that keeps those students out of the profession, is totally unacceptable and violates our professional ethics” said Dr. Martell Teasley, President of NADD and Dean of Social Work at the University of Utah. “NADD will immediately focus and pool resources on hiring a Project Manager to organize our efforts and track progress. This is a pivotal moment for our profession.”