The Compliance Toolkit is a regular feature of the Board Bulletin that will provide you with tools for handling common ethical dilemmas and issues related to the Standards of Practice found in the Minnesota Social Work Practice Act. Consider the following scenario:

I am a Licensed Graduate Social Worker practicing clinical social work at a community behavioral health clinic. My employer recently received a federal grant that requires the clinic to gather body mass index (BMI) data on all our clients. The Clinic Director has sent us information about the grant and is requiring all healthcare providers, including social workers, to collect a client’s height and weight when we see clients for their appointments. I am very uncomfortable with this and feel it is outside of my scope of practice. I have not received any specific training on how to do this or how to talk to clients about it. Is this within my scope of practice?

**Competence**

While recording the height and weight of a client is not within the legal definition of social work practice, that does not necessarily mean it is a task the social worker cannot perform. Minnesota Statutes section 148E.200 requires licensees to only provide services to the extent that they can demonstrate competence based on the "social worker’s education, training, license, consultation received, supervision experience, or other relevant professional experience." It would be inappropriate for a social worker to provide a service or indicate to the client that they were competent to complete a task without appropriate training. It is the responsibility of the social worker to ensure they are competent in the services they provide. In this case, if you do not believe you have the training to perform the service, you are obligated to obtain training or consultation so that you consider yourself to be competent. It is likely you could become competent in gathering a client’s height and weight with some training from your employer.

**Informed Consent**

In addition to ensuring that you are competent to provide this additional service, you should ensure that your client has received appropriate informed consent regarding your agency’s collection of this data. For example, it would be important to confirm that the client understands why the data is being collected, why the social worker is collecting it, and whether the client can refuse to provide the data.

**Professional Responsibility**

There will always be workplace tension in social work practice whether it comes from clients, coworkers, employer expectations, or emerging trends. It is the responsibility of the licensed social worker to assess the situation, consult as needed, ensure they are practicing competently and ethically within their scope to safely serve the client. As with any new situation in your practice, it is important to consult with supervisors and other licensed social workers to help you identify any potential concerns or impacts to the client. And as always, be sure to check the BOSW Practice Act Standards of Practice whenever you have questions about practice or new issues arise.