



UNIVERSITY of MARYLAND
PRINCE GEORGE'S
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The Honorable Senator Paul Pinsky, Chairperson
EHEA Committee
Maryland Senate
11 Bladen Street, Room 2, West Wing
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SUPPORT FOR SB 568 – Health Care Practitioners - Telehealth - Out-of-State Health Care Practitioners

Dear Chairperson Pinsky and Distinguished Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee:

I want to thank you for taking my written statement of support for SB 568 on telehealth & out-of-state health care practitioners to be entered into the public hearing record. My name is Donna Melynda Clarke and I am a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC) who resides and practices in Prince George's County, Maryland.

Telebehavioral health modalities are important to both practice environments in which I work. I am the Program Administrator for the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Center at the University of Maryland Prince George's Hospital Center. In that capacity, I manage a dual rape crisis and domestic violence program that provides wrap around services, including therapeutic trauma informed counseling. During the pandemic, our clients have experienced complex trauma due to the added social issues they face. Teletherapy has enabled us to continue providing needed support to these vulnerable victims and their families. Our clients often relocate to other jurisdictions to escape their abusers, yet still require our services. Under current license restrictions, we are prevented from continuing to serve them. COVID-19 has revealed systemic flaws in our mental health services for providers and clients alike, that will continue far beyond the end of the pandemic. It is imperative that we remove these barriers to life saving services in a responsible and urgent manner.

This bill will authorize an out-of-state health care practitioner to provide telebehavioral health services to a patient located in the state in accordance with the state practice act. This legislation also requires the health occupations board to register an out-of-state health care practitioner, allowing for necessary oversight and monitoring of out-of-state practice.

While we are working to upload and implement the Counseling Compact in this state and throughout the U.S., this immediate action, is essential for the wellbeing of Maryland residents. I strongly urge you to support telebehavioral health services and SB 568.

Sincerely,

Dr. Donna Melynda Clarke, LCPC, MS, MPA, NCC
Program Administrator