



To: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill: House Bill 670-Maryland Health Care Commission – Study on Expansion of Interstate Telehealth

Date: February 10, 2022

Position: Support with Amendments

Our organizations jointly support with amendments *HB 670 – Maryland Health Care Commission – Study on Expansion of Interstate Telehealth*. We are the Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors of Maryland, Maryland Community Health System, Maryland Nurses Association, Maryland Occupational Therapy Association, and National Association of Social Workers – Maryland Chapter.

The Maryland General Assembly has been very forward-thinking in its adoption of health occupations licensure compacts. While there are other reciprocity models, compacts offer the optimal balance between expanding access and ensuring the safety of consumers:

- Continuity of Care: Practitioners in compact states can follow their patients across state as patients travel for work, family obligations, or school;
- Ensuring Patient Safety: All states that participate in the compact have the same standards for education and training required of licensees. States also must agree on data sharing and how boards collaborate in disciplinary matters to protect consumers; and

- Easing Workforce Shortages for Facilities: Compacts address the need for licensure reciprocity for both in-person and telehealth services. Health care facilities, including community health centers, need practitioners who can engage in both in-person and telehealth care.

Given the value and importance of compacts, we suggest the amendments below to prioritize and focus this bill on promoting licensure compacts. If we can provide any additional information, please contact our representatives: Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net; Ann Ciekot at aciekot@policypartners.net; and Scott Tiffin at stiffin@policypartners.net.

Proposed Amendments to HB 670

On page 1 in line 10 strike beginning with “in consultation” down through “relevant” in line 22, and replace with

“in consultation with the health occupations boards, health professional associations, and interested stakeholders, report on:

- i. the adoption of interstate health professional licensure compacts across the country;
- ii. ways the Governor and Maryland General Assembly can advocate for the adoption of health professional licensure compacts by other jurisdictions, particularly to the District of Columbia and other adjacent jurisdictions; and
- iii. an assessment of health professional licensure compacts that are expected to be developed within the next five years.

On page 1 in line 23, strike “2023” and replace with “2022”.