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Patrick Moran – President

**HB 1013 - State Employees - Paid Sick Leave - Certificate of Illness or Disability
Signed by a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor**

**Finance Committee
March 28, 2024**

FAVORABLE

AFSCME Council 3 supports HB 1013. Under the bill, licensed clinical professional counselors join a list that includes medical doctors and surgeons, chiropractors, clinical psychologists, dentists, licensed certified clinical social workers, nurse midwives, nurse practitioners, oral surgeons, optometrists, physical therapists, and podiatrists as health care providers who are authorized to sign off on a state employee's illness or disability when required.

It is worth mentioning that as written, this bill only applies to the state employees in the state personnel management system (SPMS), and not those state employees who work in independent personnel systems like the Department of Transportation or across our Higher Education institutions. We support all state employees being covered under this bill. If the intent is to cover all state employees, we hope the committee considers an amendment to include them.

HB 1013 is extremely relevant legislation for today. At a time when mental health needs are high, access to mental health care providers can still be very challenging. By broadening the list of mental health providers that state employees can see and use leave for, Maryland is supporting our state employees by promoting their mental health and well-being. It makes sense to add licensed clinical professional counselors to the list of providers that can authorize certificates of illness or disability for state employees, and this will increase mental health care access at this critical time.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to provide a favorable report on HB 1013.