



Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Bill: House Bill 1013 – State Employees- Paid Sick Leave – Certificate of Illness or Disability Signed by a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor

Hearing Date: March 28, 2024

Position: Support

The Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors of Maryland (LCPCM) strongly support *House Bill 1013 – State Employees – Paid Sick Leave – Certificate of Illness or Disability Signed by a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor*. The bill adds licensed clinical professional counselors to the list of health care professionals who can certify illness when a state employee is seeking paid sick leave. We support the legislation for the following reasons:

- **Aligns State Employee’s Policies with Health Occupations Law:** Maryland law specifies that the following health care professionals may certify illnesses for state employees requesting paid leave: physicians, psychologists, social workers, nurse practitioners, nurse midwives, physical therapists, podiatrists, dentists, and optometrists. Licensed clinical professional counselors are not included on this list, even though they are permitted to diagnosis and treat mental health illnesses under the Health Occupations Article. This bill will address that oversight;
- **Ensuring State Employees Do Not Face Delays in Obtaining Leave for Mental Illness:** Some state employees are already being treated by licensed clinical professional counselors. If these state employees need time off because of a mental health issue, they will need to find another type of provider to certify their illness. With HB 1013, state employees would not have to face as many obstacles in obtaining needed to needed time-off to address their mental health needs.
- **Recognizing the Important of Addressing Mental Health:** The bill is consistent with Maryland’s efforts to recognize that mental health and somatic health are both important. By recognizing a fuller range of mental health providers, Maryland can support state employees in managing and addressing their mental health needs.

We ask for a favorable report. If any additional information would be helpful, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.