

March 21, 2024

Chairwoman Pena Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and distinguished members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

The National Alliance on Mental Illness, Maryland and our 11 local affiliates across the state represent a statewide network of more than 58,000 families, individuals, community-based organizations, and service providers. NAMI Maryland is a non-profit that is dedicated to providing education, support, and advocacy for persons with mental illnesses, their families and the wider community.

NAMI MD calls on state leaders to take action to end the workforce shortage in mental health services. SB409 waives the education, experience, and examination requirements for an applicant licensed or certified to practice clinical marriage and family therapy in another state or jurisdiction if the applicant has no history of disciplinary action, has not committed any act or omission that would be grounds for discipline or denial of licensure, and if the applicant submits a copy of their current license(s) from each state or jurisdiction in which they are authorized to practice.

Serious shortages exist in the mental health professional workforce. The lack of providers exacerbates unmet needs and leaves more people without options for mental health care. We are surrounded by Pennsylvania, Delaware, Virginia, and DC, which all have credentialing. Many providers and constituents live close to state lines and it could be beneficial to our citizens to allow these therapists to be licensed and credentialed to practice in Maryland.

By making reciprocal licensure for marriage and family therapists more accessible, we are increasing the number of providers in the State, who can, in turn, offer services to Marylanders who need them.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report.