



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

*Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Acting Secretary*

February 16, 2021

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky  
Chair, Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee  
2 West Miller Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

### **RE: Senate Bill 571 – Interstate Licensed Professional Counselors Compact – Letter of Support**

Dear Chair Pinsky and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of support for Senate Bill 571 (SB 571), Interstate Licensed Professional Counselors Compact. This bill would allow licensed professional counselors to enter an interstate compact and practice in participating states.

The Interstate Counseling Compact has the same form and function as other occupational licensure compacts that Maryland participates in, like the Nurse Licensure Compact and the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact. If passed, SB 571 would authorize interstate practice by professional counselors, both in-person and telehealth, who hold a valid, unrestricted home state license in a Compact member state.

If passed, this legislation would have several benefits, including but not limited to, improving continuity of care when clients travel or relocate and improving access to mental health care services. Additionally, the Compact would preserve the authority of Maryland to protect public health and safety through the existing state regulatory structure. Unlike national licensure initiatives that supersede state regulatory authority, an interstate compact allows a member state to continue to determine the requirements for licensure.

MDH respectfully requests a favorable report on SB 571 so that all Marylanders can access the care they need in the most convenient and effective manner for them.

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact me at (410) 260-3190 or [webster.ye@maryland.gov](mailto:webster.ye@maryland.gov) or Heather Shek, Deputy Director of Governmental Affairs at [heather.shek@maryland.gov](mailto:heather.shek@maryland.gov) and the same phone number.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Webster Ye".

Webster Ye  
Assistant Secretary, Health Policy