



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 16, 2021

To: The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair, Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs
Committee

Re: Letter of Support - Senate Bill 500 - Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact

Dear Chair Pinsky:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 500 - Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact.

Hospitals and their community partners improved access to the most appropriate level of care for Marylanders overall, but for the one in five with a mental health or substance use disorder, the emergency department often remains the only door to access treatment. Hospital care is only necessary for the most acute conditions, and maintaining health requires a robust system of community care. Yet, Maryland has an ongoing shortage of behavioral health professionals qualified to offer critical mental health services.

Maryland hospitals support measures that strengthen our health care workforce. Streamlining the process for psychologists to be licensed in multiple states could improve access to care, particularly for specialized services. SB 500 introduces the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact, which would allow psychology professionals to practice in states other than their home state while maintaining their current licensure. The compact was approved by the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards in 2015. There are 14 participating states, and one state will join in March. Fourteen other states and Washington, D.C., are considering participating. This collaboration would allow Maryland to access a large workforce to meet the demand for psychological health services.

This compact will improve access to psychological services by offering additional telehealth and face-to-face options from licensed professionals among states in the compact. Professionals from each state will be required to meet agreed upon standards. The Health Occupation Board of the originating licensing state will retain authority over that professional. Compacts allow a qualified group to help fill workforce shortages and the increased need for mental and behavioral health support in response to COVID-19.

This committee passed similar legislation to ensure nurses and doctors have comparable compacts, which have been successful. We urge the committee's favorable report on this bill to ensure psychology services are accessible for Marylanders.

For more information, please contact:
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