



111 Michigan Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20010-2970
ChildrensNational.org

February 1, 2021

Maryland Senate
The Committee of Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Support for SB 500, Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact Act

Dear Senators Lam and Hettleman and other distinguished committee members:

My name is Donna Marschall, Ph.D. and I am a clinical psychologist and Director of Whole Bear Care: Primary Care Behavioral Health Services at Children's National Hospital (Children's National). Children's National prioritizes accessible quality care for Maryland youth by supporting behavioral health services across the region. We exclusively provide evidence-based services within primary care centers throughout DC, that serve thousands of Maryland children, adolescents and young adults who reside in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties, and beyond. Most notably, we serve a significant number of children insured through Maryland Medicaid. Maryland patients represent 51% of the total number of patients receiving care at Children's National for 2019-2020 and 52% of those patients are Medicaid beneficiaries. Whole Bear Care psychologists, along with our highly skilled Children's National colleagues such as neuropsychologists and pediatric psychologists (specialization working with medically ill children), often utilize telehealth sessions to reduce service access barriers for the Maryland families we serve.

Mental health distress does not recognize jurisdictional boundaries. As a clinical psychologist who has had the privilege of serving Maryland's young residents and their families for over 20 years, I am keenly aware of the pressing need for access to and continuity of quality mental health care. The Maryland Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact Act will **increase mental health care access and continuity for Maryland youth and families** by removing cross jurisdictional barriers. Specifically, broadening the care reach of licensed psychologists will facilitate improved well-being for Maryland youth via cross jurisdictional telehealth intervention and support.

Children's National supports this bill because the children and families of Maryland need and deserve increased access to quality mental health care.

- **Reason #1: Increased Access to Care**

Maryland youth with mental health concerns and their caregivers need and deserve fuller access to quality care. Mental health care should not be out of reach if a psychologist's office is located outside of Maryland or the youth/caregiver is temporarily in another jurisdiction. Children's National has a highly skilled behavioral health workforce and Maryland youth would benefit from having access to a fuller compliment of these services. Whether the DC-based psychologist



conducts a telehealth session with a caregiver sitting at their Maryland-based home or is providing a telehealth session to a teen and caregiver sitting in their Maryland home, increased access benefits the Maryland resident.

- Reason # 2: **Continuity of Care**

Maryland youth with mental health concerns need and deserve opportunities to succeed.

Mental health services should not be limited based on where a young person is standing. For example, young adults receiving mental health services to address anxiety or depression should not have to forgo treatment that has enabled them to attend college out of state. During this time of transition, mental health support is often paramount to their success. Too often young Maryland residents have the opportunity to thrive but are unable to access needed services because they are geographically beyond the provider range of Maryland insurance. Sadly, I have witnessed the life trajectories of Maryland youth falter when ongoing mental health services that would have sustained their autonomy and academic success are not accessible.

- Reason #3: **Increased Mental Health Workforce**

Maryland youth with mental health concerns need and deserve access to more providers. The cost of psychologists initiating and maintaining multiple professional licenses in order to serve Maryland youth and caregivers who traverse multiple jurisdictions is time consuming and cost prohibitive. As a psychologist licensed in three local jurisdictions I can understand firsthand why other local psychologists have been unable to broaden their clinical reach, limiting service availability to Maryland youth and their families. Given the ongoing challenges of insufficient mental health service availability for Maryland youth, removing the need for professional licensure across jurisdiction (MD, DC, VA and beyond) increases care access and subsequently, the well-being of Maryland youth.

In sum, the children, adolescents, and young adults of Maryland need and deserve increased access and continuity of mental health services. Through the Maryland Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact this will be possible. We thank you for the opportunity to testify on Bill 500 and look forward to ways to work collaboratively to support better outcomes for Maryland youth.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Donna Marschall".

Donna Marschall, Ph.D.

Maryland Psychologist license: 04368

Director, Whole Bear Care: Primary Care Behavioral Health Services

Children's National Hospital

111 Michigan Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20010

Office: 202-476-2309