

February 10, 2021

The Honorable Del. Shane Pendergrass, Chairperson  
**Health and Government Operations**  
Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen St. RM. 241  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: **SUPPORT FOR HB 732** – Health Care Practitioners - Telehealth - Out-of-State Health Care Practitioners

Dear Chairperson Pendergrass and Distinguished Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee:

I want to thank you for taking my written statement of support for HB 732 on telehealth & out-of-state health care practitioners to be entered into the public hearing record. My name is Roni K. White and I am a licensed professional counselor who resides and practices in Montgomery County, Maryland.

Telebehavioral health modalities are important to me because it provides a method for the continuation of services despite client health risks, demanding occupational schedules, or debilitating disorders. When clients experience limitations or absence of childcare telebehavioral health affords clients with access to mental health services. Clients are able to receive continuity of care during job location reassignment or interruption in transportation. Telebehavioral health has assisted clients who work on medical front lines to receive mental health services safely for both the client and therapist.

We are still in the throes of a global pandemic and the need for health care and mental health services has never been greater. COVID-19 has revealed systemic flaws in our mental health services for providers and clients alike. It is imperative that we remove barriers to life saving services in a responsible and urgent manner.

This bill will authorize an out-of-state health care practitioner to provide telebehavioral health services to a patient located in the state in accordance with the state practice act. This legislation also requires the health occupations board to register an out-of-state health care practitioner, allowing for necessary oversight and monitoring of out-of-state practice.

While we are working to upload and implement the Counseling Compact in this state and throughout the U.S., this immediate action, removing barriers to critical supports, is essential for the wellbeing of Maryland residents, families, and a social services system overburdened by staggering need.

I strongly urge you to support telebehavioral health services and HB 732.

Sincerely,

Roni K. White, NCC, LCPC

Psychotherapist  
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