



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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

February 18, 2021

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: House Bill 736 – Interstate Licensed Professional Counselors Compact – Letter of Support

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of support for House Bill 736 (HB 736), 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, HB 736 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 HB 736 so that all Marylanders can access the care they need in the most convenient and effective manner for them.

I hope this information is useful. If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact me at webster.ye@maryland.gov / (410) 260-3190 or Heather Shek, Deputy Director of Governmental Affairs at heather.shek@maryland.gov or at the same phone number.

Sincerely,

Webster Ye
Assistant Secretary, Health Policy