



The Maryland Clinical Social Work Coalition

The MDCSWC, sponsored by the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work, represents the interests of more than 9,500 licensed clinical social workers in Maryland.

TO: The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Larry Hogan Administration

FROM: Judith Gallant, LCSW-C, Chair, Maryland Clinical Social Work Coalition

DATE: February 10, 2021

RE: **OPPOSE** – House Bill 732 – *Health Care Practitioners – Telehealth – Out-of-State Health Care Practitioners*

The Maryland Clinical Social Work Coalition (MDCSWC), sponsored by the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work, represents the interests of more than 9,500 licensed clinical social workers in Maryland. On behalf of MDCSWC, we **oppose** House Bill 732.

House Bill 732 authorizes a health care practitioner licensed in another state to provide telehealth services to a patient located in Maryland through a registration process to be established by the various health occupation boards. MDCSWC presumes that the intent of the legislation is to address health care provider shortages that have become more evident during the demands of the current public health emergency. Despite its notable intention, MDCSWC believes the bill, if enacted, will have a number of unintended consequences.

First and foremost, the legislation would not ensure that out-of-state providers, who registered to provide telehealth services in Maryland, would be subject to the full regulatory authority of the relevant professional board, with respect to disciplinary actions for failure to meet standard of care requirements. Further, the bill does not provide for the sharing of information between Maryland's professional boards and the boards in other jurisdictions for purposes of recognizing relevant disciplinary actions taken against the registered provider that may be relevant to services provided in Maryland. House Bill 732 allows out-of-state practitioners to register in Maryland, but there is no requirement that Maryland practitioners receive reciprocal treatment from other states. This may significantly disadvantage Maryland providers, especially those that serve Maryland residents who live close to surrounding State borders.

MDCSWC appreciates that the Administration is looking for mechanisms to ease the tremendous demand placed upon the healthcare workforce during the pandemic and to address healthcare workforce shortages. While current Executive Orders waiving licensure requirements have helped address this problem during the state of emergency, what is proposed by House Bill 732 is proposed as a permanent change to current licensure framework. Given the concerns expressed above, MDCSWC believes the unintended consequences of this legislation outweighs any potential benefit. An unfavorable report is requested.

For more information call:

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