

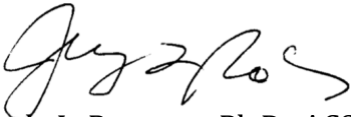
Testimony in Favor of HB 689
Certificates for Involuntary Admission – Licensed Certified Social Worker–Clinical
on behalf of Dean Postmus, University of Maryland School of Social Work
Hearing date: February 16, 2021

Thank you Delegate McComas and all the members of the Health and Government Operations Committee for addressing this critical issue and therefore recognizing the vital role of social work in serving clients in need of involuntary admission. The University of Maryland, School of Social Work appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in favor of HB 689, which includes the Licensed Certified Social Worker – Clinical (LCSW-C) among the other behavioral health professionals identified in the current law which governs involuntary admissions.

Social workers provide the majority of behavioral health services in Maryland. Social Workers at the LCSW-C (Licensed Certified Social Work- Clinical) level provide psychotherapy services to citizens suffering from serious mental illness, which at times necessitates an involuntary admission to a psychiatric in-patient facility. Being able to initiate involuntary admissions for at-risk clients is an important treatment option to assure the safety for our clients and the community at large. With this change in the law, social workers will be poised to provide much needed support to emergency room staff and law enforcement personnel when they are responding to serious behavioral health issues which present safety concerns. The Profession of Social Work, as well as this bill, recognizes the seriousness of perusing an involuntary admission and supporting a client's civil rights and personal autonomy. We take this role very seriously and are poised to work with medical providers in coordinating an involuntary admission to a psychiatric facility, when clinically warranted.

We support HB 689 in hopes it provides more opportunities for clinical social workers to serve Maryland's vulnerable citizens to access the level of care needed.

Respectfully submitted,



Judy L. Postmus, Ph.D., ACSW
Dean & Professor