

February 18, 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 736** – Interstate Licensed Professional Counselors Compact

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 736 on the “Counseling Compact” to be entered into the public hearing record. My name is Loretta Collins and I am a Licensed Graduate Professional Counselor who resides and practices in Bethesda, MD.

This Compact is important to me because the ability to provide telebehavioral health to clients across state lines not only allows people who need psychological help to receive it but for clients who move out of state to continue with a trusted therapist. As you know, services for mental health cost the United States over \$201 billion dollars a year according to Charles Roehrig’s 2016 article entitled, Mental Disorders Top The List Of The Most Costly Conditions In The United States: \$201 Billion. Teletherapy not only saves on overhead for therapists, which can help cut costs for their clients but also for the economy.

Much like existing licensure compacts for nurses, physical therapists, physicians, psychologists and EMS personnel, the Counseling Compact will increase licensure portability for practitioners while allowing state regulatory boards to better protect consumers through enhanced sharing of licensure information.

The Counseling Compact will benefit those in need of critical lifesaving mental health support and counselors by:

- Enhancing mobility for counselors who meet uniform licensure requirements;
- Increasing access to care for clients;
- Ensuring continuity of care when clients or counselors relocate or travel to other states;
- Allowing military personnel and spouses to easily maintain certifications when relocating;
- Preserving and strengthening the current system of state licensure.

The Counseling Compact preserves each state’s authority to regulate the profession. It does not alter scope of practice or impact state practice law. Counselors utilizing the Compact must abide by the laws and rules of the state in which they are practicing, including adhering to that state’s scope of practice.

I strongly urge you to support this Counseling Compact.

Sincerely,

Loretta Collins

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