



## **Maryland Addiction Directors Council**

**House Bill 291 – Health Occupations –**

**Clinical and Graduate Alcohol and Drug Counselors - Licensure**

House Health and Government Relations Committee

February 16, 2023

### **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT**

Maryland Addiction Directors Council (MADC) represents SUD and Dual Recovery outpatient and residential providers in Maryland. MADC members provide over 1,200 residential beds across the State and advocate for quality SUD and Dual Recovery outpatient and residential treatment.

MADC providers are experiencing a workforce shortage at never-before-seen levels for licensed staff and for SUD counselors. Open positions for licensed staff often are open for months with few interested candidates for many different posted positions in the area. The need for more licensed staff is key to service delivery for behavioral healthcare.

HB291 will sensibly adjust requirements for Licensed Drug and Alcohol Counselors (LCADC) and Licensed Graduate Drug and Alcohol Counselors (LGADC) without adversely affecting quality standards for licensing. MADC supports these changes. The bill removes the requirement for educational institutions at which candidates complete their educational requirements to be regional and removes specific credit hour requirements from licensure certification. The clinical level counselor requirements remain the same.

This bill will help ease the very real workforce crisis in behavioral healthcare by adjusting outdated requirements without affecting quality licensure standards. **For these reasons, Maryland Addiction Directors Council urges this committee to pass HB291.**