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February 14, 2023

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Health and Government Operations Committee

House Office Building, RM 241

Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB 0291 Health Occupations - Clinical and Graduate Alcohol and Drug Counselors - Licensure

Position: **Letter of Concern**

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychological Association, (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral level psychologists throughout the state, offers to the House Health, and Government Operations Committee a **LETTER OF CONCERN on HB 0291**. SB 0014 as currently written, may inadvertently narrow the field of qualified applicants for Clinical and Graduate Alcohol Counselors. We are concerned that this bill may exclude adequately trained students with master's degrees from other human service fields beyond professional counseling. While we await word from their Board, we want to express our desire to obtain clarification about any potential consequences that may narrow the field of applicants coming from different academic fields. We are sure you are aware of the shortage of providers for mental health and substance abuse that exists today. If this bill excludes adequately trained students with master's degrees from other human service fields, the effect of this bill may be a step in the wrong direction as we work together to improve access to mental health and substance abuse care in Maryland.

Thank you for considering our comments and proposed amendments on HB 0291. If we can be of any further assistance as the House – Health and Government Operations Committee considers this bill, please do not hesitate to contact MPA's Legislative Chair, Dr. Pat Savage at mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Resnik, Psy.D.

Rebecca Resnick, Psy.D.

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