

SB204

Favorable

TO: Senator Guy Guzzone
Chair of the Budget and Taxation Committee

FROM: Helen Hughes, MD MPH
Medical Director, Office of Telemedicine
Johns Hopkins University, School of Medicine

DATE: February 13, 2024

RE: SB204 Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Johns Hopkins Office of Telemedicine supports **SB204 Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact**. This bill authorizes regulated social workers who hold interstate compact licenses to practice social work in member states; establishing requirements for multistate licensure; establishing the Social Work Licensure Compact Commission; and providing a pathway for withdrawal from the Compact.

Johns Hopkins Medicine cares for 2.8 million patients annually and nearly 337,000 emergency room visits annually. Through telemedicine we have served 500,000 patients and provided over 2 million telehealth visits, accounting for 13% of ambulatory visits at Johns Hopkins Medicine. With 50 care locations reaching 5 states, our clinicians are eager to reach their patients wherever they are to provide continual care in coordination with local care physicians. Social Workers are crucial members of the patient's care team. By allowing Maryland to join the compact, our social workers can expand their clinical care delivery to participating states; allowing continuity of care. Our Maryland Social Workers face daily limitations of reaching patients who are out of state to complete biopsychosocial assessments for clinical protocols/treatments, calls for end of life care planning, and more. The compact would facilitate interstate practice by improving access to skills-based clinical healthcare social workers, extend the clinical care to established patients (and their families) while in their home-state and facilitate and expand communication within complex disease management. The Compact would also allow for faster onboarding of new recruits as we struggle to fill critical social work vacancies.

Oncology Social Work at Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins Hospital is overseen by Louise Knight, LCSW-C, OSW-C, FNAP, who also serves as the President for the National Society for Social Work Leadership in Health Care. Ms. Knight would gladly testify if needed, to share, from an employer and employee perspective, our national employment challenges.

We urge Maryland to pass this bill allowing Maryland to join the ISWLC.

Accordingly, Johns Hopkins Office of Telemedicine respectfully requests a favorable committee report on SB 204.

*Helen Kinsman Hughes, MD MPH
Medical Director, Office of Telemedicine
Johns Hopkins Medicine*

Medical Director of Pediatric Telemedicine
Johns Hopkins Children's Center
Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, Division of General Pediatrics
The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine
hkinsma1@jh.edu