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Senate Bill 204 Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact Support Finance Committee

February 13, 2024

The Maryland Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence (MATOD), a statewide organization representing over sixty-five healthcare organizations throughout the state promoting high-quality, effective medications for opioid use disorders is pleased to provide support for SB 204.

MATOD wholeheartedly supports SB 204 which would allow for a Social Work Licensure Compact across states. This bill would reduce the overly burdensome and duplicative requirements associated with requiring social workers to hold multiple licenses in different states and increase the public's access to competent social workers while assisting in alleviating the behavioral health workforce shortage in Maryland.

It has become increasingly difficult to hire clinical staff in behavioral health programs across the state of Maryland and social workers are uniquely trained to address chronic and severe behavioral health disorders. Social workers empower clients with advocacy, resources, goals, psychosocial assessments, and counseling. With the help of social workers, clients in opioid treatment facilities can begin their journey towards sobriety and stability.

If passed, the Social Work Licensure Compact across states would allow the social work profession to enjoy the same benefits of a compact as our colleagues who are licensed professional counselors and therapists in Maryland.

For the reasons stated in this letter, we urge the members of the committee to pass this legislation.

Sincerely,

Vickie L. Walters, LCSW-C

Vickie L. Walters, MSW, LCSW-C
Public Policy Committee
Maryland Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence

MATOD members include community and hospital based Opioid Treatment Programs, local Health Departments, local Addiction and Behavioral Health Authorities and Maryland organizations that support evidence-based Medication Assisted Treatment. MATOD members include thousands of highly trained and dedicated addiction counselors, clinical social workers, physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, peer recovery specialists and dedicated staff who work every day to save and transform lives.