



Date: February 12, 2024

To: Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier and Finance Committee Members

Reference: Senate Bill 204-Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Position: Support

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee,

On behalf of LifeBridge Health and Center for Hope, we appreciate the opportunity to comment and offer our support for Senate Bill 204. LifeBridge Health is a regional health system comprising Sinai Hospital of Baltimore, an independent academic medical center; Levindale Hebrew Geriatric Center and Hospital in Baltimore; Northwest Hospital, a community hospital in Baltimore County; Carroll Hospital, a sole community hospital in Carroll County; Grace Medical Center (formerly Bon Secours Hospital), a freestanding medical facility in West Baltimore; and Center for Hope a center of excellence focused on providing hope and services for trauma survivors in Baltimore City.

The Social Work Licensure Compact allows eligible social workers to practice in all states that join the compact. The goal is to eliminate barriers to practice and to client care along with ensuring public protection. An interstate compact is a legal contract between two or more states/territories that would enable social workers to practice in each other's jurisdiction, giving members of the profession more license mobility. The Social Work Licensure Compact will also enhance a state's ability to protect public safety.

LifeBridge Health along with Center for Hope and the Family Tree value our social worker team members who help support needs of our patients throughout our healthcare system and often in the community setting. They are critical members of our violence intervention program working with families and survivors of trauma. Given the ongoing healthcare workforce shortages and need to be flexible in recruiting professional social workers the Compact supports Maryland to remain competitive and welcoming. Maryland has adopted several similar healthcare compacts that have benefited our state in encouraging providers to practice in Maryland. Compacts add a level of expedited licensure process, does not circumvent the autonomy of the oversight board for ultimate review and discipline actions if needed.

For all the above stated reasons, we request a Favorable Report on Senate Bill 204.

For more information, please contact:

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CARE BRAVELY