



February 6, 2024

The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk  
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee  
Room 241  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: HB 628: Clinical Marriage and Family Therapists - Reciprocal Licensure Requirements**

Dear Delegate Pena-Melnyk:

The Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors of Maryland (LCPCM) **OPPOSES HB 628.**

HB 628 is *not congruent with existing statutes and regulations* requiring Marriage and Family Therapists (MFT's), who currently practice in the State of Maryland, to meet specific licensure requirements under the Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists (BOPCT). It does not allow "mutual reciprocity" nor does it require the BOPCT to determine if the requesting MFT's credentials "are substantially equivalent" to Maryland's regulatory licensure requirements.

LCPCM is very concerned the proposed changes in HB 628 are not consistent with the current regulations. The proposed legislation, permitting out-of-state MFTs to practice in our state without meeting the "current or equivalent regulatory professional standards," fundamentally changes our regulatory model for all mental health professionals and may lead to client confusion and possibly increased risk for adverse outcomes.

We recognize there is a crisis with the shortage of mental health professions in Maryland, as many jurisdictions have a mental health professional shortage area. However, we believe that a licensed MFT and their client should be provided the confidence and assurance they are giving and receiving, respectively, therapy based on the highest professional standards.

As a result, we strongly **OPPOSSE HB 628** entitled *Clinical Marriage and Family Therapists - Reciprocal Licensure Requirements* as this bill would alter the existing regulatory requirements to allow out-of-state MFTs to practice in our state.

Given the aforementioned concerns, we request the Committee give **HB 628 an UNFAVORABLE** report.

LCPCM appreciates the intent to increase access to mental health care and we thank you for the opportunity to share our views on this matter. If you have further questions concerning this written testimony, please contact this writer at [hillarybethalexander@gmail.com](mailto:hillarybethalexander@gmail.com).

Respectfully,

Hillary Alexander  
President, LCPCM

cc: Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee