



Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill: Senate Bill 221 – Health Occupations Boards – Reciprocal Licensure and Certification

Hearing Date: March 21, 2024

Position: Support

The Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors of Maryland (LCPCM) **strongly SUPPORTS SB 221, Health Occupations Boards – Reciprocal Licensure and Certification** as requested by the Maryland Department of Health, which allows *mutual reciprocity* and would require the Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists (BOPCT) to determine if, for example, a requesting Marriage and Family Therapist’s (MFT) credentials “*are substantially equivalent*” to Maryland’s regulatory licensure requirements while allowing increased access to professional mental health care.

This bill is congruent with existing law requiring licensed mental health practitioners, who currently practice in the State of Maryland, to meet specific licensure requirements under the BOPCT. It provides the client with the confidence and assurance they are receiving therapy based on the highest professional standards.

We are pleased that SB 221 would permit out-of-state mental health practitioners to meet the same “current or equivalent regulatory professional standards” as current licensed mental health practitioners.

Given the aforementioned benefits of SB 221 and that it fairly balances reasonable professional standards with opportunities for qualified mental health practitioners that desire to practice in Maryland, but within regulatory parameters and far less safety concerns, we request the Committee give SB 221 a **FAVORABLE** report.