



111 Michigan Ave NW
Washington, DC 20010-2916
ChildrensNational.org

**Testimony of Brenda Shepard-Vernon, MSW, LICSW, LCSW-C
Director, Social Work Services, Chaplaincy Services & Housing Program
Children's National Hospital
Department of Family Services**

**SB 174: Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact
Position: FAVORABLE
January 28, 2025
Senate Finance Committee**

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in favor of Senate Bill 174. My name is Brenda Shepard-Vernon, and I am the Director of Family Services at Children's National Hospital. Children's National has been serving the nation's children since 1870. Nearly 60% of our patients are residents of Maryland, and we maintain a network of community-based pediatric practices, surgery centers and regional outpatient centers in Maryland.

Children's National strongly supports the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact ("Compact") with the stated purpose of authorizing regulated social workers who hold multistate licenses to practice social work in member states, establishing requirements for multistate licensure, establishing the Social Work Licensure Compact Commission, and providing for withdrawal from the Compact. Benefits of the Compact include enhancing the mobility of social workers and increasing professional growth opportunities; ensuring a stronger and more efficient transition to an out-of-state clinical workforce; improving continuity of care for clients and patients that travel or relocate; and creating a multi-state data system about social work licenses to help improve clinical care throughout the state and nation.¹ Children's National supports all of these goals that will improve access to timely and high quality patient care. Given the mobility of providers and patients across Maryland, DC, and Virginia, this Compact is a critically important tool to facilitate practice across state lines and enhance the ability of Maryland to meet the needs of children, youth and families.

Children's National is home to approximately 75 social workers in both inpatient and outpatient settings. Our social workers are deeply invested in every facet of patient care and

¹ [Social Work Licensure Compact](#)

are critical to our mission of helping children grow up stronger. Specifically, our social workers provide an array of services including crisis intervention, behavioral health care, connection to community-based services, and more. While there continues to be a workforce shortage across several clinical specialties in Maryland, such as behavioral health, primary care, and care coordination, the work of our social work team allows our physicians to continue to practice at the top of their scope while ensuring a full array of comprehensive patient needs are being met.² However, we often experience delays in onboarding new staff who relocate from out of state due to complex licensing requirements. Since the lifting of the COVID emergency, we've encountered an unprecedented number of vacant positions in our Family Services department. After we go through the rigorous process of recruiting, interviewing, and offering a position to a candidate, we often face significant delays in obtaining their DC license, even when they are already licensed elsewhere in the U.S. In some cases, it has taken up to two months to hear back from the candidate on whether they were endorsed by DC. This extended waiting period is quite nerve-racking and puts a halt to our recruitment process. Senate Bill 174 would not only allow for speedier onboarding and our ability to hire from a broader applicant pool, but it would also allow us to continue to provide high-quality social work services to our diverse patient population across the DC metro area and improve outcomes for children and their families.

I applaud Senator Benson for introducing this important legislation, which will have life-long benefits for our state's youngest residents and their families and respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 174. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

For more information, please contact:

Austin Morris, Government Affairs Manager
almorris@childrensnational.org

² [2022 State of Maryland's Health Care Workforce Report](#)