



**Senate Finance Committee
January 28, 2025**

**Senate Bill 174
Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact**

Support

NCADD Maryland supports Senate Bill 174. The recent report called the *Maryland Behavioral Health Workforce Assessment*, conducted as a result of legislation passed by this committee, highlighted a critical shortage of behavioral health workers in the state. Maryland has about half the workforce necessary, with a growing gap projected in just the next few years.

Specifically looking at social workers and other counselors, the report found that 70% of people who graduate with master degrees do not work in the field in Maryland or in the field at all. While Maryland joining this multi-state compact will not magically fix this tremendous gap, it is a step that will help.

Joining the compact allow for employers to recruit social workers from other states who are also part of the compact. It will also allow social workers to continue their therapeutic relationships with clients who leave the state for another in compact, either temporarily for vacation or school, or permanently. With 22 states already joining the compact in just its first year, it is clear the compact is seen as a benefit to the profession and people in need of services.

We thank this committee for supporting this measure last year. NCADD Maryland believes it is imperative that Maryland not be left out of this important measure to partially address the severe workforce shortage in substance use disorder and mental health treatment.

We urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 174.