



Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services, Maine
The unified voice for Maine's community behavioral health providers

Malory Otteson Shaughnessy, Executive Director

Testimony in Support of LD 2140

An Act to Enact the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Sponsored by Representative Lydia Crafts

February 6, 2024

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Good afternoon, Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and esteemed members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services. My name is Charlotte Warren, and I am here on behalf of my client, the Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services. The Alliance is the statewide association representing the majority of Maine's community-based mental health and substance use treatment providers. The Alliance advocates for the implementation of sound policies and evidence-based practices that serve to enhance the quality and effectiveness of our behavioral health care system.

On behalf of the Alliance, I am here today to speak in support of LD 2140, "An Act to Enact the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact." The Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact facilitates the reciprocal recognition of social work licenses across participating states, streamlining the licensure process for social workers and promoting workforce mobility.

The Social Work Licensure Compact allows social workers who have or are eligible for an active, unencumbered license in the compact member state where they reside to apply for a multistate license. After verifying eligibility, the social worker is granted a multistate license which authorizes practice in all other compact member states.

Members of the Alliance, who comprise most of Maine's behavioral health provider community, believe that Maine's participation in the Compact is essential. By joining the Compact, Maine will enable licensed social workers to practice across state borders more efficiently. This is particularly important in addressing workforce shortages and consequently improving access to professional social work services.

Another benefit offered to Maine consumers of mental health services is the improved continuity of care when clients move to other states. This is especially important in supporting relocating military families. This is why in the fall of 2023, 2021 the Council of State Governments partnered with the Department of Defense and the Association of Social Work Boards to develop a new interstate compact.

The Interstate Compact will also assist the state of Maine in upholding rigorous standards for social work licensure by creating a data system of information about licensees including license status, investigative information, and adverse actions. For all of these reasons, I urge committee members to vote ought to pass on this important proposal. Thank you.