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Representative Denise Tepler
Health Coverage, Insurance and Finance Committee
State House
Augusta, Maine 04332

May 2, 2021

Re: LD 863 (HP631)

Dear Representative Tepler and Health Coverage, Insurance and Finance Committee Members,

I am writing to ask you to support LD 863 (HP 631) which would require Maine to join the Interstate Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact to Improve Telehealth Options for Psychologists and Their Patients.

Because psychologists are licensed by state, in order to treat a client in another state via telehealth, the psychologist must be licensed in both the state where the client is and the state where the psychologist is. People move, take vacations, and travel for business taking their mental health needs with them. Switching therapists is a difficult task, requiring clients to retell their stories, wait a long time for an appointment, and build trust with a new therapist.

Although I am licensed in MA, NH and ME, I cannot use a telehealth platform to provide services in any other states. I am in the process of applying to PSYPACT to improve my availability. Let me give you a couple of examples, I had a client who due to COVID was not going to school because her Vermont college was only remote. She moved to Maine to live with friends where she had a job. She began to "see" me. She then went home to Massachusetts where I could continue to treat her. However, when she returned to school in Vermont, I had to stop, and she had to find another therapist. If Maine and Vermont were PSYPACT states and I had completed my application, I would have been able to continue to see her and provide better continuity of care. Legislation is in process in both states.

Another example, also a college student, was home in Maine due to COVID and then went back to college in Massachusetts. I am able to continue to see her because I am licensed in both states, providing better continuity of care.

Currently, the need for mental health services has increased. Telehealth is enabling persons to obtain care although they may live a distance from mental health facilities, have no transportation, must stay home to monitor their children, or as a current client of mine, rest her broken leg.

I have not completed my PSYPACT application yet but will do so in the hopes that Maine will join the organization. For further information on PSYPACT go to psypact.com. There you can find a list of the current PSYPACT states as well as those with legislation pending.

Please note that the opinions in this letter are my own and not necessarily those of any organization for which I work or belong.

If I can provide you with more information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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