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April 30, 2021

Representative Tepler
Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Committee
State House
Augusta ME 04332

Re: LD863 An Act to have Maine Join the Interstate Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact to Improve Telehealth Options for Psychologists and their Patients

Dear Representative Tepler and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Committee:

I am writing to ask you to support LD 863 (HP 631). This bill is to have Maine join the Interstate Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact to Improve Telehealth Options for Psychologists and Their Patients. It is sponsored by Representative Denise Tepler.

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 providers is a difficult task requiring clients to retell their stories and build trust with a new person. I would like to provide a few examples of the negative implications of these current practice limitations on clients and on my business.

I had a client who moved out of state a few years ago. He contacted me last April as he was experiencing an increase in anxiety symptoms related to the pandemic. He wanted to return to treatment and reached out to me to seek care with some sense of urgency. I had to decline working with him and refer him to providers in his state, none of whom I knew. If Maine were a PSYPACT state, I would have been able to continue to see him and provide better continuity of care as he was living in Washington, DC (a PSYPACT state/territory member).

Another example of the impact of these practice limits is in reference to my recent training as an executive coach (which was a significant commitment of time and money). After completing the program, I established a new and separate coaching practice to distinguish it from my practice as a psychologist. However, I recently learned that several states have updated their laws to indicate that if a psychologist is providing coaching, this service is AUTOMATICALLY seen as a psychological intervention and therefore covered by licensing laws. This means that I can only practice coaching in Maine. Other professionals with less training are free to practice in any state in the United States or even with clients overseas. Psychologists are unfairly limited in their practice by licensing laws. If Maine were to enter PsyPact, I would be able to provide better continuity of care for my coaching work (if a client moves) and grow my business.

I have not completed my PSYPACT application yet as it is not useful to me unless Maine becomes a part of this network. I sincerely hope that you will consider passing this legislation as it will allow for better client care and for psychologists in Maine to be able to expand their businesses across state lines.

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

Sincerely,

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