

Please Support SB22-077 Licensed Professional Counselors Interstate Compact

Sponsors: *Senators Joann Ginal & Rob Woodward, Representatives Mary Young & Colin Larson*

Background:

Colorado already participates in numerous interstate licensure compacts for healthcare providers, including nurses, physicians, psychologists, EMTs, physical therapists, occupational therapists, audiologist and speech pathologists.

Licensure compacts generally help in expanding license portability and safely streamlining licensing burdens, which should be particularly helpful in addressing the critical workforce shortages seen across the mental health professions at this time. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted significant structural deficits in our national mental health delivery system, including the need for expanded telehealth supports and ability for LPCs to deliver services across state lines, as patients travel, transition and relocate.

SB22-077 proposes to create a new interstate licensure compact in Colorado for Licensed - Professional Counselors (LPCs) following the Council on State Governments (CSG) template – the same model used to enact licensing compacts for Colorado’s other healthcare providers in recent years. The LPC interstate compact was finalized in late 2020 and was enacted in Georgia and Maryland in 2021, with more than a dozen additional states currently considering legislation. Once 10 states join the compact it will become effective. Under the compact, counselors must abide by all the laws, rules and scope of practice in the state in which they are practicing.

Compact Benefits:

- Increases access to care and care delivery options for patients.
- Streamlines licensing to expand workforce capacity to meet surge and emergency needs.
- Permits additional LPCs to provide services to underserved or geographically isolated populations through telehealth or in-person service delivery.
- Improves continuity of care when patients relocate or travel to other compact member states.
- Eliminates barriers to care for providers by reducing licensure burdens and improving portability to practice across state lines without needing full licenses (costs, paperwork, time) in each additional member state.
- Improves consumer protection across state lines by ensuring safe regulation through shared data and disciplinary systems.
- Early adoption allows Colorado to shape the rules that will govern implementation of the compact across the country, ensuring a model that serves the best interests of our state.

Supporters:

Colorado Counseling Association
Children’s Hospital Colorado
Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council
Colorado Community Health Network
Colorado Hospital Association

Mental Health Colorado
NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness)
Colorado
National Association of Social Workers,
Colorado Chapter

Questions? Contact:

Jennifer Goodrum, Principal • jbgoodrum@michaelbeststrategies.com • 303.999.6553
Wes Skiles, Principal • wskiles@michaelbeststrategies.com • 720.203.6565