

February 25, 2021

House Bill 970 - Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact- SUPPORT

Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Peña-Melnyk, and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee:

The National Alliance on Mental Illness, Maryland and our 11 local affiliates across the state represent a statewide network of more than 45,000 families, individuals, community-based organizations and service providers. NAMI Maryland is dedicated to providing education, support and advocacy for persons with mental illnesses, their families and the wider community.

NAMI Maryland supports HB 970 and Maryland joining the 14 other states that are a part of the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact (PSYPACT) in order to reduce regulatory barriers and increase access to mental health services. In the COVID Era, discussions of health equity and access are becoming increasingly more important as legislatures around the country are seeking solutions. NAMI-MD believes that passage of HB 970 would positively impact health equity and access measures, by allowing psychologists to practice outside of their original state jurisdiction and allowing for patients to receive care from out of state providers through in person consultation or telehealth.

Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact (PSYPACT):

- PSYPACT is a cooperative interstate agreement enacted into law by participating states
- PSYPACT allows for the provision of psychological services via telecommunications technologies across state lines by licensed psychologists
- PSYPACT addresses increased demand to provide/receive psychological services via electronic means (telepsychology)
- PSYPACT permits psychologists to provide services to populations that are currently underserved, geographically isolated, who lack specialty care (e.g. opioid and other addictions, autism spectrum disorder, child treatment) and those reluctant to seek treatment due to the stigma of mental health care.
- PSYPACT provides continuity of care - there is an increased need for continuity of services across state lines as the population becoming increasingly mobile
- PSYPACT facilitates the coordination of care by allowing family members who may not be local to the patient's area to participate in their treatment and provide additional support for the patient
- PSYPACT authorizes both telepsychology and temporary in-person, face-to-face practice of psychology across state lines in PSYPACT states
- PSYPACT states maintain the authority to regulate telepsychology and temporary in-person, face-to-face practice