



Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill Number: House Bill 112

Title: Health Occupations – Service Members, Veterans, and Military Spouses –
Temporary License, Certifications, Registration, and Permitting

Hearing Date: January 20, 2022

Position: Support with Amendment

The Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors of Maryland (LCPCM) supports facilitating licensure for military members, veterans, and spouses. To further that goal, we are supporting *House Bill 112 – Health Occupations-Service Members, Veterans, and Military Spouses – Temporary License, Certifications, Registration, and Permitting* with amendments.

Permanent Licensure is the Goal

Temporary licensure may not be an adequate solution for professional counselors. Our practitioners primarily sustain their work through billing of private insurance and Medicaid. However, it may be difficult to get credentialed by carriers with a temporary license. Therefore, permanent licensure is really the solution for professional counselors who are members of the military, veterans, or spouses. Luckily, Maryland law already provides for expedited licensure for these individuals.

When Is Temporary Licensure Appropriate

LCPCM believes it is important that practitioners meet State licensure to practice. We cannot protect Maryland’s public without that underlying principle. However, we recognize that there may be some circumstances in which a practitioner is fully qualified, but an application process may get extended because of delays in providing proof that those requirements have

been met. For example, a practitioner from out-of-state will have to take a Board-approved implicit bias training for starting to practice, and such a course might not be available on a continuous basis. Also, there may be delays in getting the results back from a criminal history record check and those delays are totally outside of the practitioner's or even the Board's control. Therefore, LCPCM thinks temporary licensure may be a reasonable solution to address these circumstances.

When Temporary Licensure is Not Appropriate

LCPCM believes all underlying educational and experience requirements should be met before an individual is titled as a "licensed clinical professional counselor". In Maryland, LCPCs have the educational and experience to diagnose patients, but this is not true for every state. But under the structure of this bill, an individual could obtain a temporary license while obtaining the missing education and experience that would allow them to diagnose. This could put patients at risk. It also puts other professionals at risk – clinicians, educators at schools, professionals providing wrap-around services – rely on the diagnosis of the LCPC to understand how to support their patients and students.

We want to support the core of the bill, and we believe that there could be amendments that keep the underlying purpose intact and address the issues we have raised. We would be pleased to work with the sponsor, the Committee, and other stakeholders on this issue. If we can provide any further information, please contact Scott Tiffin at stiffin@policypartners.net or 443-350-1325.