



FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY

Forward thinking. World ready.

ADVANCED EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee:

The counseling faculty at Fort Hays State University supports the addition of Kansas to the Counseling Compact. The Counseling Compact is an interstate compact, or a contract among states, allowing professional counselors licensed *and* residing in a compact member state to practice in other compact member states without need for multiple licenses.

There are many advantages to being a member of the compact for both clients and for counselors. One main advantage is the continuation of services with the same counselor for students/clients who leave Kansas, either permanently or temporarily. Currently, counselors cannot work with their clients if they are not physically located in the state of Kansas and there is a plethora of reasons why people may not be in the state at any given time; college students may leave on breaks or for summer, military family members may be transferred in the middle of counseling, jobs transfers, work travel, or even travel for enjoyment. An advantage for counselors is a reduction in time to become authorized in other states, cutting down on administrative tasks and allowing counselors to do what they do best, work with their clients.

Why is continuity of care so important in counseling? Counseling can be incredibly helpful for folks and one of the most important components is the counseling relationship with the therapist. This relationship is fundamental and takes time to build. In counseling clients share about the hardest parts of their lives and asking them to do this with a new therapist is both very challenging and time consuming as well as potentially harmful. While it can certainly be done it is more comfortable to continue with a person you already know and trust.

Another advantage to this legislation is increased access. Many Kansas citizens live in rural areas where there is not much access to mental health care. There needs to be a good fit between the counselor and client for counseling to be effective and in areas in which there are few mental health practitioners, people may not be able to find a counselor who is a good fit. Once this compact comes fully into effect, it will allow Kansas citizens to seek help from counselors in other states so long as those states have also signed onto the compact and those counselors have applied to practice in Kansas. This could be a great benefit for rural Kansans living near our borders as both Colorado and Nebraska have already signed onto this compact and legislation is pending in Missouri. This could also be a great benefit for Kansas

counselors living near these borders to expand their client base by reaching out to clients across those same borders.

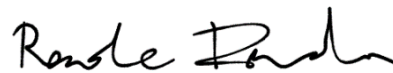
It is for these reasons that the counseling faculty of Fort Hays State University support the counseling compact for our students, for the residents of Kansas, and for counselors.

Sincerely,

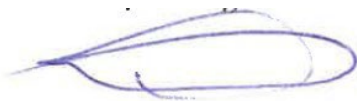
The Fort Hays State University Counseling Faculty



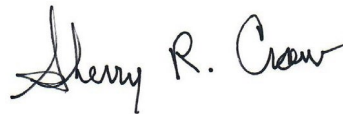
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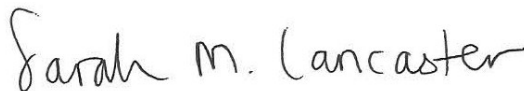
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