

Kansas Senate Committee  
Topeka State Capitol  
300 W. 10th  
Topeka, KS 66612

***RE: In support of HB2288- Counseling Compact***

March 20, 2023

Dear Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee:

On behalf of the counseling programs at Kansas State University I'm writing to express our unwavering support for HB 2288, and offer thanks for your consideration of the counseling compact in Kansas.

The proposed compact provides numerous benefits to Kansans. Notably, it 1) supports place-based and rural communities, 2) increases potential providers so counseling services can be received in a timely manner, 3) supports military-connected individuals, 4) helps bring uniformity among licensure processes and counseling professionals, and 5) strengthens opportunities for Kansas State University's future online counseling programs.

First, there is a clear and ever growing need in Kansas for mental health services. Kansas currently has high mental health prevalence with some of the lowest access to care (mhnational.org). Anecdotally, some individuals have reported referral wait lists for counseling services as long as 3-4 months. By allowing the counseling compact, current Kansas citizens could receive more timely care by adding licensed counseling options to combat the current shortage of providers. Telehealth opportunities with qualified licensed counselors would provide access to those who might not otherwise have, or have limited access to services, particularly in place-based or underserved rural areas in Kansas.

Secondly, the counseling compact reciprocity is beneficial for those near the state line. The bordering states of Colorado and Nebraska are already in the counseling compact, and the state of Missouri is also working towards joining the counseling compact this legislative session. This compact would be especially beneficial to those in the Kansas City metro area who experience the challenges of a border city/state and finding qualified counselors.

Next, much like the interstate teaching compact that benefits military-connected students and families, the counseling compact would allow counseling licensure reciprocity that would directly benefit military personnel and spouses. Since each county in Kansas has military-connected individuals, and Kansas has two installations with Fort Riley and Fort Leavenworth, being military-friendly seems critical.

Another important consideration in adopting the counseling compact is the uniformity of licensure demands. A licensed professional counselor (LPC) must complete a minimum of 60 credit hours and the licensure requirements in their home state. One must be licensed and current in their home state, which then allows the privilege to practice in the compact states. One must abide by the scope of practice and laws of the state the client is located. My colleagues and I endorse having a clear, consistent, shared licensure requirement, as this only strengthens the profession.

Finally, as a land-grant institution, Kansas State University's mission is to provide education and access to improve the lives of the individuals, families, and communities within Kansas. We hold this mission in great esteem. Through your support of the counseling compact, this not only helps to fulfill the Kansas State mission of supporting and providing access to Kansans, it further supports Kansas State's counseling programs and providing quality mental health support to Kansans.

As the counseling programs coordinator, my colleagues and I enthusiastically support the interstate counseling compact for all the aforementioned reasons. We see this compact as a necessary move in providing critical mental health support to Kansans. If there is any other way that I can be of assistance in this process, please contact me at [jjj3636@ksu.edu](mailto:jjj3636@ksu.edu) or 785.458.1979

Best regards,

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