



National Lieutenant Governors Association

1 **Resolution to Support Adoption of the Interstate Counseling Compact**

2 **WHEREAS**, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted or halted critical mental health services in 93% of
3 countries worldwide while the demand for mental health services increased (World Health Organization,
4 10/5/20)¹, and

5 **WHEREAS**, during the pandemic, between three to four in ten adults in the U.S. have reported
6 symptoms of anxiety or depression, a share that has been largely consistent, and which is up from one in
7 ten adults who reported these symptoms from January to June 2019, according to the Kaiser Family
8 Foundation (KFF) (1/10/21)², and

9 **WHEREAS**, mental and behavioral strife during the pandemic is happening against a backdrop of high
10 rates of mental illness and substance use that existed prior to the current crisis (KFF) (2/10/21)³, and

11 **WHEREAS**, history shows the mental health impact of disasters outlasts the physical impact,
12 suggesting today's nationwide, elevated mental and behavioral health needs will continue well beyond
13 the coronavirus outbreak itself (KFF), and

14 **WHEREAS**, as states and territories work on actions to alleviate the burdens of the COVID-19
15 pandemic, it will be essential to consider how the increased need for mental health and substance use
16 disorder services have grown and will likely persist long term, even if and as new cases and deaths due
17 to COVID-19 subside, and

18 **WHEREAS**, the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration noted a current and
19 growing shortage of mental health and substance use disorder professionals prior to the pandemic, and

20 **WHEREAS**, this shortage will grow as case demands continue to increase, and

21 **WHEREAS**, interstate compacts provide a pathway for certain behavioral health professionals to move
22 seamlessly from one state to another through an agreement among states to recognize another state's
23 license (American Counseling Association (5/19/21)⁴, and

¹ World Health Organization <https://www.who.int/news/item/05-10-2020-covid-19-disrupting-mental-health-services-in-most-countries-who-survey>

² Kaiser Family Foundation, Adults Reporting Symptoms of Anxiety or Depressive Disorder During COVID-19 Pandemic <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/adults-reporting-symptoms-of-anxiety-or-depressive-disorder-during-covid-19-pandemic/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

³ Kaiser Family Foundation, The Implications of COVID-19 for Mental Health and Substance Use <https://www.kff.org/report-section/the-implications-of-covid-19-for-mental-health-and-substance-use-issue-brief/>

⁴ American Counseling Association <https://www.counseling.org/news/updates/news-detail/2021/05/19/maryland-becomes-second-state-to-sign-interstate-counseling-compact-into-law>



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- 24 **WHEREAS**, the Counseling Compact was created to allow experienced professional counselors and
25 therapists licensed in one state to provide needed services for residents of a different state and, and
- 26 **WHEREAS**, in this increasingly mobile society and the relative uniformity of state licensing regimes, to
27 require relicensing upon relocation, which can take several months before professionals can see patients,
28 is archaic in today's world, and
- 29 **WHEREAS**, the lack of licensure reciprocity is a particular challenge for communities near the border
30 of a neighboring state, and
- 31 **WHEREAS**, the use of the Counseling Compact for licensure reciprocity will increase the supply of
32 mental and behavioral health, and substance use disorder treatment providers to meet the ever-increasing
33 demand for such services within states, and
- 34 **WHEREAS**, the Counseling Compact will enhance licensure portability for practitioners wishing to
35 practice across state lines while allowing state boards to protect patients through enhanced sharing of
36 licensure information, and
- 37 **WHEREAS**, when 10 states enact the enabling legislation the Counseling Compact will go into effect,
38 enabling professional counselors who meet uniform licensure requirements to quickly obtain a privilege
39 to practice, which is equivalent to a license to practice counseling in another state, and
- 40 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the National Lieutenant Governors Association
41 (NLGA) encourages states to adopt the Counseling Compact.
- 42 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the NLGA encourages states and territories to explore and engage
43 in the use of interstate compacts and license reciprocity in other fields serving mental and behavioral
44 health needs.

ADOPTED, this day, the _____ of March, 2022.

Sponsors: Lt. Governor Boyd Rutherford (R – Maryland), Lt. Governor Jacqueline Coleman (D – Kentucky),
Lt. Governor Bethany Hall-Long (D – Delaware)