



# Wisconsin Psychological Association

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Date: Monday, May 15, 2023

To: Representative Moses and members of the Assembly Committee on Health, Aging, and Long-Term Care

From: Dr. Mike Zussman  
Licensed Professional Counselor  
License no. 4823-125 WI

Re: Assembly Bill 207 Relating to: ratifying and entering Wisconsin into the Counseling Compact

First, thank you for considering this testimony. The Wisconsin Psychological Association (WPA) and I are excited about the prospect of Wisconsin joining the Counseling Compact. Our organization was very active in supporting PSYPACT during the 2021-2022 legislative term and strongly supports this legislation to extend interstate practice to Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC).

My reasons for supporting this are both professional and personal because I am an LPC in addition to serving as the Vice-President of WPA. I believe my reasons for supporting this legislation is widely shared by other LPC's.

My practice is focused in the Milwaukee area where I have been practicing for just over ten years. While I started by working with a younger population, I have since focused my practice to focus primarily on working with adolescents while also seeing some children and adults. My practice has evolved into a hybrid model consisting of mostly in-person sessions but including telehealth sessions as well. This works well for my adolescent clients who graduate high school and stay in Wisconsin to attend college. However, I do have many clients who chose to go attend college out-of-state. Due to the current restrictions, I am not allowed to provide services to those clients until they return to Wisconsin unless I expend time and money to obtain licenses in each of those states.

Moving away from home and to college can be hard for some. They would find more success if there was a continuation of care. I find that most of my clients are hesitant to seek services out-of-state because they do not know the area and do not want to establish another relationship with a second provider. If Wisconsin were to join the Counseling Compact, I would be able to continue seeing my clients when they attend college in reciprocal states.

For example, I have clients at Tulane in Louisiana, University of Washington, University of Colorado – Boulder, and at DePauw University in Indiana, all states that are members of the Counseling Compact. I have other clients attending college in Illinois, New York, and Iowa which are all states like Wisconsin with pending legislation to join.

Speaking from experience, it is difficult for providers to obtain licensure in other states. If Wisconsin were to join the Counseling Compact, other providers would see Wisconsin as another place where they could establish a practice much more easily if coming from a reciprocal state. Many of the providers I know have long waitlists to be seen. By welcoming more providers from Counseling Compact states, we can potentially reduce the waiting period that many people must endure in order to be seen for psychological services.

I am really encouraged to learn that our legislature is considering this move. Only about half of the states are members of this compact while a handful more have pending legislation to join. By joining this compact in addition to PSYPACT (which we recently joined), Wisconsin has the potential to show the rest of the country that we are serious about addressing our mental health needs. While this would be such a beneficial move for the providers in our state, more importantly, it would greatly benefit our clients in many ways. Thank you again for your consideration.