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Maryland Becomes Second State to Sign Interstate Counseling Compact into Law

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The American Counseling Association and licensed professional counselors nationwide are celebrating the signing of Maryland House Bill 736 in support of the Counseling Compact, which will authorize counselors to practice across state lines once enacted.

Maryland has become the second of 10 states needed to enact the [Counseling Compact](#), an interstate compact allowing professional counselors licensed and residing in a compact member state to practice in other compact member states without the need for multiple licenses. Governor Larry Hogan just signed Maryland H.B. 736 into law, reaching another major milestone for the initiative on the heels of Georgia's signing its bill into law earlier this month.

Funded by the American Counseling Association and led by the National Center for Interstate Compacts, the compact was finalized in December 2020 and was quickly passed by the legislatures in both Georgia and Maryland. Once 10 states have enacted the legislation, the compact will go into effect, enabling professional counselors who meet uniform licensure requirements to quickly obtain a privilege to practice, which is equivalent to a license to practice counseling in another state.

Compacts provide a pathway for counselors to move seamlessly from one state to another through an agreement among states to recognize another state's license. Currently, counselors have difficulty transferring their licenses from one state/jurisdiction to another because of the independent nature of jurisdictional licensing rules and regulations. There is little consistency regarding the requirements for licensure and these varying requirements make it difficult to transfer one's license.

"Seeing Maryland sign this bill into law within the same month as Georgia speaks volumes about the importance of mental health care access in 2021," says ACA President Sue Pressman. "Now, we need to keep this momentum going as we work to get more states on board and reach that critical 10 state threshold."

Currently, compact bills are pending in Nebraska, Tennessee and North Carolina as well and approximately 15 other states have expressed interest in the compact and are preparing to introduce the bill during the 2022 legislative session.