



2023 Senate Bill 2205
House Industry, Business and Labor Committee
Representative Scott Louser, Chairman
March 28, 2023

Chairman Louser and members of the House Industry, Business and Labor Committee, I am Jeana Scheffler, Director of Clinical Services at Prairie St. John's, an accredited 132-inpatient bed psychiatric hospital in Fargo. On behalf of the North Dakota Hospital Association, I testify in support of SB 2205, Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact, and ask that you give the bill a **Do Pass** recommendation.

Residents of North Dakota will benefit from increased access to psychological services, which are invaluable to the wellbeing of this State.

Psychology is a unique and highly collaborative discipline, providing care in settings such as hospitals, jails, schools, courtrooms, and mental health facilities. The workforce in North Dakota frequently supports residents from neighboring states in healthcare settings. Individuals starting treatment in North Dakota would be able to continue their care in locations such as Minnesota, a current PSYPACT member.

North Dakotans deserve improved access to mental health treatment, and we need to work collaboratively to reduce wait times across disciplines. The psychology profession is uniquely suited to take advantage of telehealth services as they do not require medical equipment and most testing is already computer-based. In situations where a specialized psychologist is needed, out of state providers can provide support by obtaining temporary licensure. Likewise, psychologists licensed in North Dakota can strengthen their practices by providing services to individuals in states with higher populations and increased need for psychological services.

I have had the privilege of being a licensed mental health therapist in North Dakota for the past seven years and can attest to the rigorous requirements North Dakota has set forth

for mental health professional licensure. The process of applying for an equal license in a neighboring state with reciprocity is expensive, and a state without reciprocity is both repetitive and costly. Joining PSYPACT is a proactive step to reduce this burden.

Thank you for your consideration in joining 35 other states that have already decided to improve access to healthcare for their residents, military families, those in residential and hospital settings out of state, and rural communities.

We understand that an amendment will be proposed to allow the Board of Psychologist Examiners to adopt rules and standards to establish a predoctoral supervised psychological internship program. We are supportive of such an amendment because it would provide invaluable experience in clinical practice, help establish a reimbursement mechanism with third party payers, and be another way to grow the workforce.

Please give the bill a **Do Pass** recommendation. I would be glad to respond to any questions you may have.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeana Scheffler, Director of Clinical Services
Prairie St. John's