

Good morning. My name is Bob Pierattini. I'm the Chief of Psychiatry at UVMHC.

I'm testifying in support of the interstate licensing compact that would simplify licensing procedures for physicians. Shortening the duration of licensing and limiting the burden of the application process would help us in recruiting psychiatrists to Vermont and New York.

We are in the process of expanding our mental health services to improve access for people with mental health problems. I'm sure you are aware of the crisis we are facing in our emergency departments and inpatient psychiatry units. And you know that we have an opioid epidemic that has created much suffering in the state.

We are recruiting to address these problems. Bringing a physician to full practice is a very lengthy process. After the search process has resulted in a plan to hire, the physician must obtain a license and DEA to practice here. The hospital must credential the physician. There is a period of enrollment with Medicaid. The entire process can take many months, delaying our recruiting. Anything we can do to shorten the process would be welcome.

We also now have working relationships with the northern region of New York. There are many opportunities for collaboration, including the sharing of professional staff and more efficient movement of patients to regional services. And we have the opportunity to use telepsychiatry more extensively, especially in the management of opioid use disorders. Simplifying licensing between the two states would advance these possibilities.

I believe that this compact would be helpful to us in addressing some of the unmet health needs in our region.

I would be happy to answer any questions.