

October 14, 2023

As a clinical social worker here in Manchester and a member of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), I am writing to urge you to support the Social Work Compact that is being introduced this upcoming legislative session.

The following are examples of ways the passage of the compact would benefit some of our more vulnerable Vermonters who are either receiving or seeking to receive mental health and/or substance abuse treatment:

- When a Vermont student who has been in therapy leaves the state, often a time of vulnerability and anxiety, the student is unable to access the support they have come to rely on.
- If a Vermonter who is receiving therapy services moves to another state, they lose the ability to benefit from the ongoing support of their therapist during what is often a challenging time of transition, even for a brief period while they seek services from another provider.
- If a Vermonter travels to another state and during that time experiences a crisis or difficulty that would benefit from therapeutic support, they are unable to access that support.
- Vermonters in therapy who spend periods of time in other states, such as our “snowbirds”, cannot maintain their therapeutic relationship while they are out of state.
- Clients in need of therapeutic support while their provider is away out of state cannot receive that support unless it is from a covering clinician which is often not as helpful.
- Many Vermonters are waiting long periods of time to access services due to the high demand and limited availability of qualified professionals. These people would have a much wider range of options if the compact was in place.

These are all situations I have faced with clients over the years. In the past two years alone, I have 5 clients who have been negatively affected by these circumstances and I am only one solo provider. I would have many more, but for having gone to the time and expense of securing my license in Florida because so many of our residents winter in that state. I have not been able to accommodate those who winter in other states or who have moved to other states, as I couldn't possibly manage the resources that would be necessary to maintain licenses in all those places. In addition to the paperwork and licensing fees, each state has its own continuing education requirements to be met.

Thank you for your consideration of this important bill and for the work you do on behalf of your constituents.

Sincerely,

*Peg Gregory, LICSW*