



House Bill 742- State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapist- Sunset Extension and Program Evaluation

Letter of Information

Dear Members of the House Health & Government Operations Committee:

House Bill 742 extends the termination provisions of the Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists until July 1, 2021, and implements recommendations made by the Department of Legislative Services in the board's sunset review report. The legislation aims to make regulations related to Alcohol and Drug Counselors more efficient and changes the composition of the board to better reflect the makeup of the credentialed professionals in the field.

The Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) Behavioral Health Task Force, in its report, "*A Roadmap to an Essential, Comprehensive System of Behavioral Health Care for Maryland*," recommended that the state:

“Invest in the highly skilled workforce and physical capacity needed to proactively manage behavioral health conditions.”

The task force found that an increase in the number of clinical and non-clinical professionals is needed to care for an increasing number of Marylanders facing behavioral health problems, such as mental illness and substance use disorders. The state will need to play an active role in building this workforce, and improving the efficiency of the relevant licensing boards is imperative. Further, ensuring that the board composition accurately reflects professionals in the field is necessary to maintain a current and germane workforce policy to help manage Maryland's behavioral health challenges.

We will continue to look for ways to work with the Maryland Department of Health to ensure the state's clinical workforce is robust, professional, and able to meet the demand of Maryland's residents.