

March 7, 2024

Honorable Joseph J. Solomon, Jr.
Chair, House Corporations Committee
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: H-7350 Relating to Businesses and Professions -- Social Work Compact

Dear Chair Solomon and Members of the House Corporations Committee:

Please accept the Rhode Island Health Center Association's letter in support of House Bill 7350. This bill would adopt model legislation for the interstate practice of regulated social workers, supporting the mobility of licensed social workers through the development of an interstate compact.

Data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2020) showed individuals enrolled in Medicaid experienced a disproportionate burden of mental illness, substance use disorders, and chronic health conditions. Community Health Centers play a vital role in addressing these needs providing medical, dental, and behavioral health care to over 200,000 Rhode Islanders; 55% of patients are enrolled in Medicaid, and 90% are at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. In 2022, health centers experienced over 140,000 mental health services clinic visits; highlighting the critical demand for accessible behavioral health care services.

The Social Worker Compact represents a significant step forward in streamlining the licensing process for social workers, promoting professional standards, increasing access to crucial mental health services, and ultimately improving the well-being of individuals and families in our state.

Thank you.

M. Campbell

Melissa Campbell
Policy Manager

Rhode Island Health Center Association members include:

Blackstone Valley Community Health Care Inc. ~ Comprehensive Community Action Program ~
East Bay Community Action Program~ Providence Community Health Centers ~
Thundermist Health Center ~ Tri-County Community Action ~
WellOne Primary Medical and Dental Care ~ Wood River Health