

January, 19, 2025

RE: Support for House Bill No. 7064

Dear Committee,

My name is Alyssa Scott, MFT-A and I am clinician at Thrive Behavioral Health in Warwick Rhode Island. As a clinician who is both personally and professionally affected by Rhode Island's current licensure requirements, I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill No. 7064, which has the potential to positively impact both clients and MFT's alike in the state.

At the start of 2026, the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) determined that four out of five counties in Rhode Island are considered Health Professional Shortage areas for mental health providers. Having worked in both in-office and home-based community programs for the past two years, I have first-hand understanding of the negative effects staff shortages have on clinicians and the community. Across organizations, I've seen clients face, at times, long waitlists, and clinicians endure the stress of high productivity demands – often leading to burnout and job turnover. I am among the only in my cohort from the University of Rhode Island to remain in Rhode Island. Fellow clinicians in my cohort sought Connecticut and Massachusetts licensures instead of Rhode Island given the high barrier to independent licensure and limits to portability.

HB 7064 reduces direct client contact hour requirements for licensure, strengthens role-specific training by requiring a portion of supervised experience to be with couples and families, and reduces unnecessary barriers to licensure portability across states. HB 7064 modernizes Rhode Island's LMFT licensure pathway by:

- Aligning direct client contact hour requirements with national and regional norms,
- Strengthening role-specific training by requiring supervised experience with couples and families, and
- Reducing unnecessary barriers to licensure portability across state lines.

These reforms support workforce stability and access to care in a small, interconnected region where many residents live, work, and seek services across state borders—especially in the digital age.

For the reasons listed above, I respectfully urge you to support HB 7064 and vote in its favor.

Thank you for your time and service.

Sincerely,

Alyssa Scott, MFT-A
Clinician, Thrive Behavioral Health
Warwick, RI