

January 19, 2026

RE: Support for House Bill No. 7064

Dear Committee,

My name is Amanda Fontaine and I am a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in private practice in Wakefield, Rhode Island. As a licensed clinician in Rhode Island for the past 23 years who is 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 stakeholders around the state.

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**.

Some of the potential benefits of this bill include:

Modernize RI Licensure Law Toward National and Regional Parity

Rhode Island's direct client contact hour requirements for MFT licensure are among the highest in the nation and exceed the national average. Reducing the direct client contact hour requirement modernizes Rhode Island's licensure law in our profession and brings us closer to national norms.

More importantly, changes in HB 7064 make Rhode Island licensure more comparable to other states in our region—particularly Connecticut and Massachusetts—keeping Rhode Island competitive as therapists consider where to live and work. These updates are designed to make it more favorable for clinicians trained in Rhode Island to stay and practice in Rhode Island, rather than seeking licensure and employment in neighboring states.

Modernizing requirements also helps close potential loopholes that can arise when licensure standards differ substantially across neighboring states. Aligning Rhode Island's licensure expectations with the regional landscape reduces incentives for individuals to circumvent requirements elsewhere and then transfer back into Rhode Island, while still supporting fair and efficient mobility for qualified clinicians in good standing.

Removes Unnecessary Burdens for Licensure

There is no evidence that excessive postgraduate supervision requirements produce higher-quality therapists. Higher numbers of required hours primarily serve to delay full licensure for clinicians who are otherwise qualified and ready to serve the mental health needs of our community. Reducing hours to be more in line with national and regional standards ensures a more accessible, streamlined pathway to licensure.

More accessible pathways to licensure reduce unnecessary burdens for candidates and may help attract and retain qualified therapists to provide care in Rhode Island rather than relocating to neighboring states where licensure laws are more favorable.

Improves License Portability

Rhode Island is a small state within a highly interconnected region, and many Rhode Islanders live, work, and seek specialized services across state borders. In the digital age—where telehealth and cross-border continuity of care are increasingly common—reducing unnecessary barriers to dual licensure and endorsement simply makes sense for both clients and clinicians.

In my practice, being located close to URI, I often see students as clients. This bill would help ensure continuity of their care when they return home to their out-of-state families' homes for break.

Reflects Current Quality Standards

HB 7064 preserves appropriate safeguards and strengthens role-specific training requirements in a way that supports public protection. While the bill moves Rhode Island toward parity by reducing the direct client contact hour requirement, it also requires that a portion of those hours be specifically focused on couples and families—appropriate to the license being granted. This provides meaningful quality control for the profession and supports the systems-focused scope of Marriage and Family Therapy practice.

This bill additionally updates language surrounding educational practicum requirements to reflect current standards set forth by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE).

As a clinician, practice owner, and Rhode Island constituent, I strongly support this legislation. Many other states have pursued similar modernization efforts, and I am hopeful that Rhode Island will continue to update licensure laws in a way that strengthens the workforce and improves access to mental health services for the benefit of people across our state.

As such, I respectfully ask that you support HB 7064 and vote in its favor.

Thank you for the work that you do in responding to the needs of your constituency.

Sincerely,

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