



April 19, 2022

The Honorable Leslie Herod
Chair, Colorado House Appropriations Committee
Colorado House of Representatives
200 E Colfax Ave., Room #307
Denver, CO 80203

The Honorable Julie McCluskie
Vice Chair, Colorado House Appropriations Committee
Colorado House of Representatives
200 E Colfax Ave., Room #307
Denver, CO 80203

RE: ATA COMMENTS ON SENATE BILL 22-077

Dear Chair Herod and Vice Chair McCluskie:

On behalf of ATA Action, I am writing you to express our support for Senate Bill 22-077, which would enact the Interstate Licensed Professional Counselor Compact in Colorado.

ATA Action, the American Telemedicine Association's affiliated trade association focused on advocacy, advances policy to ensure all individuals have permanent access to telehealth services across the care continuum. ATA Action supports the enactment of state and federal telehealth policies to secure telehealth access for all Americans, including those in rural and underserved communities. ATA Action recognizes that telehealth and virtual care have the potential to truly transform the health care delivery system – by improving patient outcomes, enhancing safety and effectiveness of care, addressing health disparities, and reducing costs – if only allowed to flourish.

Senate Bill 22-077 serves as a rational expansion of Colorado's telehealth policy. If passed, the bill would enable professional counselors licensed in other Compact states to deliver care to Colorado patients, including via telehealth. Colorado would join nine other states that are already Compact members, and the Colorado Legislature is one of 12 others that has introduced legislation to enact the Compact this year. Approving the Counseling Compact in Colorado would make it significantly easier for Coloradans to connect with their preferred providers at a time and place that is convenient for them and ensure that Coloradans have access to professional counselors when the demand for behavioral health services has never been higher.

While we support Senate Bill 22-077, our organization suggests expanding these licensure waivers to all out-of-state providers, not just those who are licensed in states that have ratified the Counseling Compact. ATA Action believes that patients should be able to receive virtual care from their preferred provider – regardless of that provider's physical location – so long as

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the providers are licensed and in good standing in their home states, are utilizing the appropriate technologies to uphold the established standard of care, and are still capable of being held accountable by the State Board of Licensed Professional Counselor Examiners should any issues arise from treatment of a Colorado patient. By permitting all out-of-state counselors who maintain good standing in their states of residence to practice into Colorado, Colorado patients would have the opportunity to connect with qualified providers whenever and wherever their need for care arises. Policies which enable out-of-state counselors to practice at the top of their licenses and deliver high-quality health care via telehealth remove arbitrary geographical barriers that limit patients' access to counseling services, making it much easier for patients in unserved and underserved communities to get the care they want and need.

Thank you for your interest in telehealth. We encourage you and your colleagues to pass Senate Bill 22-077 and consider our amendments in the interest of expanding Colorado patients' access to affordable, high-quality counseling care. Please let us know if there is anything that we can do to assist you in your efforts to adopt practical telehealth policy in Colorado. If you have any questions or would like to engage in additional discussion regarding the telehealth industry's perspective, please contact me at kzebley@ataaction.org.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kyle Zebley", is written over a light gray circular watermark that contains the text "ATA ACTION".

Kyle Zebley
Executive Director
ATA Action