



TO: Members of the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

FROM: Shara Ragan, LMSW
Director of Care Management
AdventHealth Shawnee Mission

DATE: March 18, 2024

RE: House Bill 2484 – Social Work Licensure Compact

On behalf of **AdventHealth in Kansas**, we appreciate this committee hearing [House Bill 2484](#) to include Kansas in the national Social Work Licensure Compact, to provide interstate practice privileges for social workers.

As the healthcare industry experiences workforce challenges, efforts are underway to promote the field and attract needed professionals to Kansas while retaining our current workforce. Improving the ability for professionals to move to Kansas and use licenses from other states through compacts is a strategy to help streamline the hiring process.

Compacts are not new to Kansas. Thanks to the success of the Nursing Compact, which went into effect in 2019, we have hired a number of nurses that were able to begin working without delays, using the compact/multi-state license. The Social Work Compact will help Kansas attract more qualified workers.

AdventHealth has several facilities near the state line, so it is common to hire team members licensed in Missouri who come work for us in Kansas. Missouri was the first state to join this compact and given our proximity, we strongly support Kansas joining.

Currently, it can take months to transfer and apply for a Kansas license for a social worker who has a clinical license (LCSW) from another state and has relocated to our state. This delays the hiring process at a time when there is increasing demand for the profession.

At AdventHealth, social work is embedded across the continuum of care including in the inpatient hospital setting, behavioral health, physician offices, therapy and counseling, Cancer Center, home health, and our B.E. Smith Family Center, serving children with disabilities and their families. Social work is called to help in critical areas to ease human suffering and care for people in their worst moments, but also to educate about mental health, wellness and prevention. From pending death and grief, suicide, rape, abuse, addiction, child abuse, traumatic family accidents, homelessness, human trafficking, post-partum depression, and post-acute services to promote health and wellbeing after the hospital stay. Today, the expert skill set social workers bring is needed more than ever, especially with the increased demand for mental health resources and therapy utilization. Additionally, research has demonstrated that clinical care impacts only 20% of health outcomes, while social determinants of health affect as much as 50%.¹ Given this evidence,

¹ Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation [Addressing Social Determinants of Health: Examples of Successful Evidence-Based Strategies and Current Federal Efforts](#). April 2022.

the work that social workers do to address patients' socio-economic needs is of significant importance.

We pride ourselves on never discharging a patient and social workers provide the care coordination and follow-up to reduce readmissions and improve health outcomes. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) now requires hospitals to screen for social determinants of health issues and we work with community-based organizations to help address any identified patient needs. As we continue to work to provide whole-person care to our patients, our staffing needs for social workers have grown.

AdventHealth strongly supports this bill to bring more skilled social workers to Kansas. Thank you to this committee for considering this legislation that passed the House by a vote of 118-2.

AdventHealth delivers whole-person care serving the greater Kansas City metro area and beyond, with three hospital campuses in Kansas including Shawnee Mission, South Overland Park and Ottawa; outpatient campuses in Lenexa and at College and Metcalf in Overland Park; and 52 AdventHealth Medical Group physician office locations. We employ 4,000 team members in Kansas.