

THE COUNSELING ADVOCATE

A NEWSLETTER OF THE OHIO COUNSELING ASSOCIATION'S
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE



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HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY? SHARE IT IN THE ADVOCATE!

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MAKING ADVOCACY MEANINGFUL IN 2021

SEE YOU AT VIRTUAL LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY DAY!

Greetings from the Ohio Counseling Association's Government Relations Committee (GRC)! We hope this newsletter finds you well as we continue into a beautiful spring. This time of year is always the most exciting for us on the GRC as we prepare for the OCA's annual Legislative Advocacy Day (LAD). For the first time, we will be conducting a VIRTUAL LAD. On Tuesday, April 13, from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. we will join together virtually to engage in conversations surrounding social justice, advocacy, and current legislative initiatives in Ohio. This year, in partnership with the Ohio School Counseling Association, we will be discussing topics such as telehealth and insurance reimbursement, the new House Behavioral Health Supports Committee, the ACA interstate compact initiative, job description for school counselors, policies providing flexibility for schools in light of COVID-19, the new school funding formula, and updates from the OCSWMFT board. We will be joined by a variety of individuals including state senators, state representatives, licensure board members, and others as we engage in meaningful advocacy conversations for our profession, for our clients, and for the citizens of Ohio. Additionally, we will be scheduling virtual meetings for you to meet with your state senator or representative where you will get a chance to discuss three important issues which OCA is following: **Universal Licensure**, **Telehealth**, and **Conversion Therapy**. OCA is not charging for registration this year. However, we are encouraging that in lieu of registration, attendees make a donation to OCA's Political Action Committee (PAC). It is through our PAC that we are able to support, lobby, and advocate for issues of interest.

We hope to see you during LAD 2021!

Dr. Sean Gorby
OCA GRC Chair

REGISTER FOR LAD 2021 HERE

It's not too late!



ACA INTERSTATE COMPACT

Licensure portability remains a central focus of the counseling profession. Most recently, portability efforts are centered around a **licensure compact**, which is basically defined as a group of states who extend practicing privileges to licensees of any state that is a member of the compact. Unlike universal licensure laws, the compact preserves the regulatory authority of states to protect public health and safety through the current system of state licensure. The purpose of the counselor licensure compact, as purported by ACA, is to facilitate interstate practice of counseling with the goal of improving public access to licensed professional counselors.

WHAT WILL THE COMPACT DO?

1. provide for the mutual recognition of other members state licenses,
2. enhance states' abilities to protect the public's health and safety,
3. encourage the cooperation of member states in regulating multi-state practice for licensed professional counselors,
4. support active-duty military personnel and their spouses as they move between states,
5. enhance the exchange of licensure, investigative, and disciplinary information among member states,
6. allow for the use of telehealth technology to increase access to counseling services
7. support the uniformity of professional counseling licensure requirements throughout the states,
8. eliminate the necessity for licenses in multiple states, and
9. facilitate interstate practice by licensed professional counselor who meet uniform requirements.

HOW WILL THE COMPACT BE ENACTED?



Ten states must become members. To become a member state of the compact, state compact legislation must be passed identifying that state as a member of the compact. Currently, Maryland and Georgia have passed legislation to join the compact. Further, Nebraska and Tennessee both have bills that are being worked on at the committee level. North Carolina and Delaware legislators are currently drafting Counseling Compact bills for introduction.

WHAT ABOUT OHIO?

The OCA is diligently monitoring the progression of the compact and engaged in conversation with ACA. Although this is an initiative championed by ACA, it is important that each state takes an individual look at the compact and determine the positive and negative impact the compact could have on their state. There are many elements involved in the ACA compact bill and many implications. These will be discussed in more detail during an **ACA Compact summit at LAD** at which time OCA representatives will present details surrounding the compact, hear Ohio counselors' opinions on the compact, and how this may impact the work of professional counselors in Ohio.



GOVERNMENT RELATIONS LEARNING MOMENT



WHAT'S A P.A.C.?

OCA has an established **Political Action Committee (PAC)** which serves a critical role in our legislative and advocacy efforts. The PAC is a voluntary, non-profit organization that is not affiliated with any political party. The PAC has a fund that is dedicated to promoting OCA's legislative and advocacy needs, and is critical to our lobbyists' work. This fund was formed in accordance with OhioLaw.

We encourage all of our members to consider donating to the PAC to support OCA's legislative and advocacy efforts!

[Click here to donate to OCA's PAC!](#)



Julia Wynn
Director of Government Affairs



MEET OUR LOBBYISTS

from the *Government Advantage Group*

Julia has spent her entire Ohio career in and around state government and politics. A 2015 alumna of the competitive Statehouse Legislative Service Commission Fellowship Program, she came to Columbus from her hometown outside of DC, where she held a number of legislative and policy positions in the nation's capital before starting the Fellowship. She served as a Legislative Aide in the Ohio House of Representatives for a little over two years, gaining critical state budget experience as a policy staffer for a finance subcommittee. She joined Government Advantage in early 2019 fresh off the campaign trail, where she managed finance operations for a statewide candidate. Julia graduated Summa Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa from Denison University with a BA in Sociology and Communication. She is the Vice President of Ohio Women in Government.

Amanda has been involved in state government relations Columbus, Ohio for over 15 years. She began her career by working as a page in both the Ohio House of Representatives and Ohio Senate while getting her degree in political science at The Ohio State University. After college, she went to work as a legislative aide to a State Senator, before moving to the private sector in 2004 to work in lobbying. Amanda began her lobbying career working for one of the first female owned independent lobbying firms (Towner Policy Group) where she represented a variety of client interests before the state legislature and Ohio regulatory agencies. In 2015, Ms. Towner retired and soon after Amanda joined Government Advantage Group as a Partner. Amanda currently serves as the Immediate Past President of the Ohio Lobbying Association, is a member of the planning committee for the Ohio YMCA Youth in Government program and an active member in Ohio Women in Government. Amanda is an Ohio Lobbying Association Certified Lobbyist, successfully completing requirements by the Ohio Lobbying Association "Certified Lobbyist Program".



Amanda Sines
Partner

OHIO HOUSE BILL 33

DEFINITION.

requires social workers, counselors, and veterinarians to report animal abuse; also requires law enforcement, dog wardens and animal control officers to report child abuse.

FACTS.

- was signed into law by Governor Dewine on 1/6/21 and goes into effect 4/12/21
- provides civil immunity to reporting parties.
- applies when professionals are acting in official capacities and the role is not to investigate, but report suspected abuse of companion animals and all dogs and cats.



If you have reasonable suspicion to believe that an animal is suffering from harm, abuse or neglect, contact the agency in your county responsible for taking reports of animal cruelty, such as the local humane society or dog warden.

Visit ohioanimaladvocates.org/reportcruelty for information about reporting animal cruelty in the state of Ohio.

OTHER LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

HB 122 (Telehealth Bill) passed unanimously out of the House Insurance Committee March 24th, and is heading to the Senate for a hearing. OCA supports this bill.

SB 2 involves changing requirements for court-ordered competency evaluations and mental health treatment in criminal cases. It passed the Senate and the House and is returning to the Senate for a final confirmation regarding amendments before being fully enacted. OCA supports this bill.

SB 131/HB 203 (Universal Occupational Licensing) means all professions licensed in one state would be eligible for licensure in all other states regardless of different professional standards. The sponsors previously heard much opposing testimony, including from OCA. Neither the House nor the Senate version of this bill has had a hearing yet. Conversations about interstate compact licensure bills may impact this bill by possibly supplanting the need for it.

HB 5 modifies requirements for a chemical dependency counselor to provide more access to providers of prevention services. HB 5 passed the House and has had two hearings in the Senate. OCA supports this bill.

HB 41 exempts mental health care providers information from disclosure under public records law, adding forensic mental health providers, mental health evaluation providers, and regional psychiatric hospital employees to the list of protected providers. It has passed the House and is expected to pass the Senate. OCA supports this bill.

SB 100 allows mental health professionals to provide a crisis assessment to a minor of any age without parental consent if the parent/guardian isn't available to provide consent and they have reason to believe that the minor may be suicidal or pose a risk of physical harm to others. No hearings are scheduled yet. OCA supports this bill.

JOIN THE GRC.

Interested in government relations?
Passionate about advocacy?
Want to get involved?

The OCA Government Relations Committee needs YOU!

Contact the editors of The Counseling Advocate to learn how you can help.

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