

# ANDRÉ JACQUE

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*Testimony before the Senate Committee on Insurance, Licensing and Forestry  
State Senator André Jacque  
January 12, 2022*

Chair Felzkowski and Colleagues,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today in support of Senate Bill 534, the PSYPACT bill, bipartisan legislation which ratifies and enters Wisconsin into the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact and will provide for the ability of a psychologist to practice more easily in other compact states.

Under current law psychologists are hampered by a web of legal restrictions which diminish access to care for those in need. As a result, Wisconsin faces a devastating shortage of mental health professionals in the vast majority of the state.

This interstate compact (PSYPACT) allows for psychologists to practice either in person or other than in-person across state lines in other states which have enacted it. As a result, quick and efficient access to mental health resources will be greatly increased.

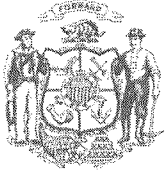
Under our present law, access to care can be affected in many ways.

- A Wisconsinite might live in a rural area served by psychologists in another state.
- A person's problems may call for treatment by a specialist who is not available in Wisconsin.
- A sports psychologist cannot travel with the team provide psychological services to players.
- A Wisconsinite may temporarily move out of state for medical treatment, a vacation, a winter respite, or to attend school.

Those are just a few instances which PSYPACT is designed to address. Currently 27 states have enacted it, including Illinois and Minnesota. As more states do so, PSYPACT will become even more effective in alleviating mental health care shortages and improving access to mental health services.

Significant provisions of the compact include:

1. The creation of a Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact Commission, which includes one member or representative of the licensure boards of each member state.
2. The ability for a psychologist to obtain an E Passport, which allows a psychologist to practice interjurisdictional telepsychology in another compact state if the psychologist satisfies certain criteria.
3. The ability for a psychologist to obtain an interjurisdictional practice certificate (IPC), which grants temporary authorization for the psychologist to provide temporary in-person, face-to-face psychological services in another compact state for up to 30 days within a calendar year if the psychologist satisfies certain criteria.
4. The ability of member states to issue subpoenas that are enforceable in other states.



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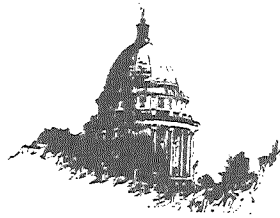
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5. The creation of a coordinated database and reporting system containing licensure and disciplinary action information on psychologists to whom the compact is applicable.
6. Provisions regarding resolutions of disputes between the commission and member states and between member and nonmember states, including a process for termination of a state's membership in the compact if the state defaults on its obligations under the compact.

This legislation was requested by the Department of Defense State Liaison Office and is supported by the Wisconsin Psychological Association and numerous health systems. It is time for us to modernize our laws and join our neighbors in prioritizing mental health resource accessibility for Wisconsinites.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 534.



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# PAUL TITTL

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 25<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Senate Committee on Insurance, Licensing and Forestry

Senate Bill 534

January 12, 2022

First of all, I would like to thank you, Chairman Felzkowski and committee members, for allowing me to testify before you today concerning Senate Bill 534 relating to ratification of the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact (PSYPACT).

As you know, Wisconsin has a shortage of psychologists. About 30 counties have no practicing psychologist outside of a hospital setting. That shortage has been particularly difficult, because the COVID situation has resulted in a significant increase in the number of people seeking psychological services.

PSYPACT provides greater opportunity for people in Wisconsin to receive needed mental health help. It does so by allowing psychologists to practice either in person or other than in-person across state lines in states which have enacted the compact. As a result, quick and efficient access to mental health resources will be greatly increased.

However, the benefits of PSYPACT extend beyond the COVID situation. Here are some other situations in which joining PSYPACT could increase access to care:

- A Wisconsinite might live in a rural area served by psychologists in another state.
- A person's problems may call for treatment by a specialist who is not available in Wisconsin.
- A sports psychologist would be able to travel with the team to another state and provide psychological services to players.
- A Wisconsinite moving temporarily out of state for medical treatment, a vacation, or to attend school could, continue receiving care from a psychologist in Wisconsin.

Those are just a few instances PSYPACT is designed to address. Currently 27 states have enacted it, including Illinois and Minnesota. As more states do so, PSYPACT will become even more effective in alleviating mental health care shortages and improving access to mental health services.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to address any questions you might have.

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## **Testimony of Samantha Alisankus**

**Senate Committee on Insurance, Licensing and Forestry**

**January 12, 2022**

**Room 411 South, State Capitol**

**Public Hearing**

### **Senate Bill 534: ratification of Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact**

Hello, my name is Samantha Alisankus, and I live in Evansville, WI (Rock County). I want to start by saying thank you for allowing me to speak with you today. I am here to speak in favor of Senate Bill 534: Ratification of Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact. In my allotted time, I hope to cover two topics related to my support of this bill.

To start, I am in favor of this bill, because without it the current legislative landscape creates a significant burden to Wisconsin residents trying to pursue or continue mental health care. I have had the unique occasion to experience this burden firsthand, having just moved back to Wisconsin after 10 years in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Under the current landscape, I am unable to see my provider from Minnesota in person or over video visits so long as I am in the Wisconsin state lines. In order to see my provider, even over video, I need to be physically within the border of Minnesota.

What this looks like for me is that I need to take a day off of work; travel three hours to La Crescent, Minnesota or Winona, Minnesota; book a hotel room with reliable WiFi access for one hour; sign into my video appointment with my provider in Minneapolis; attend my one-hour video call from the hotel; checkout of the hotel room; and drive the three hours back to my home in Evansville.

As you can imagine, this comes at both a significant time and financial cost, not to mention it puts my continuity of care at risk due to the fact that I am not always able to line up a full day of availability with my provider's already limited appointment schedule.

And this brings me to second topic today: I am in favor of this bill because it increases a patient's ability to have continuous and timely care. I have had the opportunity, through the course of my life, to have a significant amount of interaction in the medical community due to my broader health needs; likely much more than your average 28-year-old. And what I have observed is that more than any other kind of medical provider, mental health providers must rely substantially on the trust developed between them and their patients in order to achieve accurate diagnosis and treatment of a mental health condition. This trust acts as the gateway for patients to share their most personal thoughts, feelings, memories, concerns, and questions. It allows them to speak about past traumas, and situations and thoughts that scare them. Unlike other medical providers who can rely on diagnostic testing, imaging, and physical evaluation, mental health providers must establish trust with their patients to unravel and reveal the details that can lead to the diagnosis and treatment of a mental illness.

Although I have always considered myself to have a trusting relationship with my provider, it still took me almost seven years to share with them a topic that ended up being a key to diagnosis and treatment. Without ratification of this bill, I will be left with only two choices for my care: 1) either continue to shoulder the burden of having to drive across the state line, and all that it entails, to receive care, or 2) establish with a new provider here in Wisconsin. Although I have no doubt that there are competent and qualified providers here in Wisconsin, I fear that it may take me another seven years to build the kind of

trust I have with my current provider, and that this could mean another seven years, for a combined total of 14 years, before I am able to truly start receiving the care I need.

Before I move to closing, I would like to mention that I know this not only unique to me. I know of at least one other person in my immediate circle who is in the same situation, but in reverse: where they are living in Minnesota, and have to travel into the Wisconsin border to speak over the phone with their provider. In other words, this lack of legislation not only impacts residents who have returned to Wisconsin and want to continue to see their out-of-state provider, but also those residents who moved out-of-state and want to continue to see their Wisconsin provider.

In closing, I hope that as you consider whether or not you will vote in favor of this bill, you consider that voting in favor will reduce the burden placed on Wisconsinites to continue to have ready access to timely and continuous care, and will maintain for them the ability to seek that care with a provider they have chosen and trust. These, taken together, will ensure that patients can receive the diagnosis and treatment that they need.

Thank you.

Date: Wednesday, January 12, 2022

To: Senator Felzkowski, Chair, and members of the Senate Committee on Insurance, Licensing and Forestry

From: Dr. Ben Rader

Licensed Clinical Psychologist

License no. 2945-57 WI

RE: Assembly Bill 537 Relating to: ratification of the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact.

I am a clinical psychologist and own my own private practice in the Milwaukee area. I have practiced here for the past ten years, and in this time I have seen clients residing in our state and in the immediate vicinity. Over the past two years in particular, this has changed considerably, as I have begun to receive requests for services from people living in other parts of the state, and even individuals living in other states. Since the advance of telehealth possibilities on account of the COVID pandemic, I have been afforded greater opportunity to serve people in other parts of the state who would not otherwise have been able to benefit from my services. State boundaries can be difficult to navigate and currently, my license only affords me the capacity to see people in Wisconsin.

With PSYPACT, I would have the opportunity to serve clients looking for services while living in other states. I would also be able to continue serving clients of mine who need to relocate outside of state boundaries. In the past two years, multiple clients have needed to relocate to other states. During the times of transition and location changes, the ability to maintain a psychological provider is a true benefit. As insurance networks continue to operate across state lines, PSYPACT would make it possible for me to continue serving clients when work opportunities and job placement changes cause them to move out of the state.

PSYPACT also is a benefit when it comes to attracting psychological providers to our state. Currently, becoming licensed in another state is a cumbersome process that varies from state to state. The complexities multiply depending on where the psychologist is moving from, and where they are moving to. With PSYPACT, psychologists would more readily be able to set up new practices in other states that also participate in the PSYPACT agreement. PSYPACT may thereby offer opportunities for out-of-state psychologists to relocate here, or to operate practices that may set up operations here. Since PSYPACT includes basic standards for the practice and application of psychology, it allows for increasing access to services, while maintaining protection of the public.

I first learned about PSYPACT years ago, and have followed this development with anticipation. I am happy to learn of efforts to bring Wisconsin into the PSYPACT agreement. I feel this is the future for psychological services across our country.

Date: Wednesday, January 12, 2022  
To: Senator Felzkowski, Chair, and members of the Senate Committee on Insurance, Licensing and Forestry  
From: Melissa J. Westendorf, J.D./Ph.D, S.C.  
Clinical and Forensic Psychologist  
PO Box 511653  
Milwaukee WI 53203  
RE: Assembly Bill 537 Relating to: ratification of the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact.

I have been a practicing forensic and clinical psychologist in Wisconsin for nearly 20 years. I have served on the Psychology Examining Board and served in leadership positions for the Wisconsin Psychological Association and the American Psychological Association. The majority of my work serves the criminal justice system within the state, with a large portion of my time as a forensic psychologist for the state of Wisconsin, Department of Corrections. Over the years I developed an interest in telepsychology as I was required to periodically practice telepsychology as part of my service to the state of Wisconsin. Eventually, I developed an expertise in the ethical and legal practices of telepsychology services and now provide nearly monthly training programs throughout the United States, certifying psychologists in the practice of telepsychology. As a trainer I teach psychologists about PSYPACT and how PSYPACT is a practical, ethical, and standardized way to practice telepsychology across state lines.

As the global pandemic laid bare the deficits in health care and mental health care, the inability to practice across states lines frustrated mental health providers and patients alike. During my continuing education programs, therapists provided numerous examples of complications with providing telepsychology to their clients that had crossed state lines, some of which would have been resolved if Wisconsin (or relevant state) participated in PSYPACT. Moreover, research beginning in the 1990's has demonstrated repeatedly the positive benefits of telepsychology to clients and psychologists.

I truly believe the future of mental health care must include a telepsychological component so that therapists can continue providing services to those in need. With escalating mental health needs and a paucity of local therapists to serve the needs of all those individuals, telepsychology (and PSYPACT) provides Wisconsin psychologists with a means to legally and ethically serve those in other PSYPACT states. These services would place Wisconsin as an innovator in the future of mental health care and in line with contiguous PSYPACT states (e.g., Illinois and Minnesota).





**Marshfield Clinic  
Health System**

1000 North Oak Avenue  
Marshfield, WI 54449

Date: January 9, 2022

To: Senator Felzkowski, Chair, and Honorable Members of the Wisconsin Senate -  
Committee on Insurance, Licensing, and Forestry

From: Jennifer Michels, PhD, ABPP  
Board Certified Clinical Psychologist  
Director of Training – Adult Clinical and Health Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship  
Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health  
Marshfield Clinic Health System  
WI License #2257-57

Re: Testimony in support of Senate Bill 534 relating to: Ratification of the Psychology  
Interjurisdictional Compact

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 534 regarding ratification of the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact. I am a clinical psychologist working for the past twenty years at Marshfield Clinic Health System (MCHS) in Marshfield, Wisconsin. MCHS employs psychologists as core professionals in our broad efforts to deliver quality mental health services to rural patient populations in Wisconsin. MCHS registered support for PSYPACT.

I am pleased to see the Wisconsin Legislature review PSYPACT. Currently, twenty seven states across the U.S. have enacted and are participating in PSYPACT, to include our neighboring states of Illinois and Minnesota. PSYPACT legislation was recently introduced in Michigan in October, 2021. With the surge of mental health needs precipitated by the pandemic, access to mental health services has never been more critical. Telehealth delivery of mental health treatment has been repeatedly shown to not only be effective but also more accessible and affordable. The pandemic forced rapid adoption of telehealth service delivery, technology adoption has gone well for professionals and patients alike, and patients consistently report favorable reviews of these mental health services and the benefits.

Adoption of PSYPACT in Wisconsin will have many positive impacts. There are two populations that particularly stand to benefit from this legislation. The first are the many college students that our behavioral health professionals treat who attend college out of state. These students will greatly benefit from maintaining treatment relationships with professionals they trust. College age Americans have been the age group most severely hit with negative mental health impact from the pandemic and their elevated mental health needs are expected to persist long after the pandemic crisis concludes. Without PSYPACT, I am unable to continue mental health treatment with my college age patients studying in Illinois, Minnesota, and other states. The second population who will positively benefit



from this legislation are Wisconsin residents wintering in warmer states temporarily through the year. With PSYPACT adoption, their care will no longer be disrupted when they head south for the winter. Patients who move out of Wisconsin would also be able to maintain a valued treatment relationships with their psychologist after relocation. Finally, patients who leave the state to temporarily care for family members and friends would be able to maintain their psychological treatment.

Marshfield Clinic Health System specializes in providing multi-disciplinary team care to individuals with rare medical conditions. Adoption of PSYPACT will facilitate continuity of care with these patients traveling from other states who seek care and ongoing consultation from our specialists. Psychologists are a core part of our multi-disciplinary teams providing specialty consultation. One such example is our Bardet-Biedl Syndrome (BBS) Clinic at Marshfield Medical Center serving children and adults with BBS. There is no other clinic in the U.S. providing comprehensive, clinical evaluations and individualized treatment care recommendations for BBS. Families travel from around U.S. and the world to participate in this clinic, network with other families with BBS, and join the Clinical Registry Investigating Bardet-Biedl Syndrome (CRIBBS) - the largest worldwide registry examining the long-term health of individuals with BBS. PSYPACT will provide our psychologists with greater opportunity to bring specialty behavioral health assessment and treatment services to a broad array of patients and continue consultation with them after they return home.

Finally, Marshfield Clinic Health System continues to geographically expand to meet medical and behavioral health needs in the Midwest. This includes developing service access for underserved, rural populations in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan who can often attain care in Wisconsin more easily due to proximity. Currently, psychologists at MCHS are unable to provide mental health services to these patients unless we individually pursue a Michigan license. PSYPACT adoption in Michigan and Wisconsin will reduce barriers to care for these underserved populations who are currently receiving medical services in our health care system.

PSYPACT sets basic standards for the practice of psychology to maintain protection of the public while allowing increased access to mental health services for Americans. A recent op-ed in the Boston Globe highlighted the country's mental health crisis – noting that we are experiencing a mental health pandemic within a pandemic. The author, a psychiatrist, declares that access to care must be dramatically expanded and calls upon legislators, insurance companies, regulators, and licensing boards to respond boldly and swiftly to our current mental health crisis. One critical call to action named in the article is to “allow clinicians to provide virtual care across state lines to optimize mental health care.” Wisconsin legislators have the opportunity at this moment to take such action, facilitate positive change, and reduce barriers to mental health care for Americans.

Thank you for consideration of Senate Bill 534. Your time and attention to this important bill is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Michels, PhD ABPP  
Board Certified Clinical Psychologist