

# Licensing Reform Task Force Healthcare Subcommittee

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## SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION: MONTANA SOCIAL WORK COMPACT ADOPTION

### Recommendation

The **Healthcare Subcommittee** recommends that the Licensing Reform Task Force endorse Montana's enactment of the Social Work Licensure Compact and include the endorsement in the Task Force's final report as a workforce mobility, behavioral health access, telehealth, continuity-of-care, and public-protection reform.

### Executive Order No. 1-2026 Report Elements Addressed

This recommendation addresses the following Executive Order No. 1-2026 report elements:

- **Public health, safety, or welfare risk:** The compact preserves Montana authority over practice in Montana and supports discipline-information sharing.
- **Public benefit from licensure:** The compact maintains licensure as a public-protection framework while reducing duplicative multistate barriers.
- **Specialized skill or training, and justified qualifications:** The compact aligns with existing social work licensure categories and compact requirements for education, supervised practice, examination, complaints, discipline, and criminal history procedures.
- **Unnecessary barriers to entry:** The compact reduces duplicative licensure requirements for qualified social workers seeking to serve clients across state lines.
- **Workforce shortages and rural access constraints:** The compact supports behavioral health access in rural and underserved Montana communities.
- **Portability, reciprocity, or endorsement pathways:** The compact creates a multistate licensure pathway for qualified social workers.
- **Alignment with rural health transformation initiatives:** The compact supports rural behavioral health access, telehealth, continuity of care, and workforce mobility.

# Policy Assessment

## Benefits

The compact would expand access to behavioral health services, particularly in rural and underserved areas, by reducing duplicative licensure barriers and enabling telehealth and continuity of care across state lines. It also supports public protection through shared interstate licensure, adverse-action, and investigative data.

## Limitations

Implementation should remain subject to final legal review, fiscal note preparation, confirmation of criminal history check authority, data-system integration, compact fee authority, and coordination with the Board of Behavioral Health and affected stakeholders.

## Motion

The **Healthcare Subcommittee** moves that the Licensing Reform Task Force endorse the recommendation that Montana enact the Social Work Licensure Compact, direct staff to include the recommendation in the Task Force's final report as a workforce mobility and public-protection reform, and request preparation of implementing legislation for consideration during the next legislative session, subject to final legal review, fiscal note preparation, and confirmation of necessary implementation authority and procedures.