



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 1, 2024

To: The Honorable Joseline Peña-Melnyk, Chair, House Health & Government Operations Committee

Re: Letter of Support - House Bill 146 - Health Occupations Boards – Reciprocal Licensure and Certification

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 62 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on House Bill 146.

Maryland hospitals continue to experience workforce shortages. The latest data show the positions with the highest vacancy rates in Maryland hospitals are:

- Surgical technicians, 17.8%
- Licensed practical nurses (LPN), 16.8%
- Nurse practitioners, 12.3%
- Registered nurses (RN), 12.1%

Vacancies for RNs vary by region. In Southern Maryland, for example, the vacancy rate is more than double the statewide rate—30.6%.

A 2022 [GlobalData](#) report estimates a statewide shortage of 5,000 full-time registered nurses and 4,000 licensed practical nurses. Without intervention, shortages could double or even triple by 2035. MHA's [2022 State of Maryland's Health Care Workforce report](#) outlines a roadmap to ensure Maryland has the health care workforce it needs now and into the future.

One recommendation is to remove arbitrary barriers to licensure across state borders to facilitate access to telehealth. The Maryland Board of Physicians has led the way by [creating](#) expedited licensure pathways to allow reciprocity for physicians licensed in Virginia and Washington, D.C. This is a creative solution that benefits all jurisdictions. Additionally, the Maryland Health Care Commission in 2023 completed a [study](#) on interstate telehealth expansion, which included recommendations on greater reciprocity for services delivered via telehealth.

HB 146 would allow health occupations boards that do not already have the authority to create reciprocity agreements the ability to do so. The ability to license out of state providers through reciprocity agreements in an expedited fashion could help reduce workforce shortages and increase access to care for all Marylanders.

For these reasons, we request a *favorable* report on HB 146.



For more information, please contact:

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