



Maryland  
Hospital Association

## **Senate Bill 359- Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Compact**

**Position: *Support***

February 13, 2024

Senate Finance Committee

### **MHA Position**

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of Senate Bill 359.

Maryland hospitals continue to face a staffing shortage, including physician shortages in anesthesia, cardiology, gastroenterology, primary care, psychiatry, and radiology. To fill these gaps, many hospitals rely on advanced practice registered nurses to ensure access to care in rural areas and for high need specialties. 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 key recommendation is to remove barriers to licensure across state lines.

Under the Governor's executive orders during the COVID-19 public health emergency, Maryland hospitals seamlessly recruited providers with active out-of-state licenses to care for Marylanders. These individuals were essential to fill critical workforce gaps, particularly among advanced practice nurses like nurse practitioners. Many hospitals, especially those near border states, frequently hired nurse practitioners to support critical care units.

When the state public health emergency expired, so did the ability for nurse practitioners to work in state using an active out-of-state license. The Board of Nursing allowed an emergency exception, which allowed for interstate reciprocity for registered nurses (RN) and licensed practical nurses (LPN) without a compact license. Advanced practice nurses were not included. It can take months to license an out-of-state APRN with the current Board of Nursing licensure system.

SB 359 would help alleviate the unnecessarily lengthy process for APRNs licensed and in good standing in other states. Maryland was the first state to join the Nurse Licensure Compact in 1999. This compact relieves some burdens associated with the state's licensure process for RNs and LPNs. We have observed how effective compacts are for nurses and physicians.

Three states, including Delaware passed the APRN compact, and three states, including Maryland, have pending legislation.<sup>1</sup> Seven states are needed for the compact to be activated. Given the critical workforce shortage, having Maryland participate in this compact would help

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<sup>1</sup> National Council of State Boards of Nursing. (n.d.). "[APRN Compact](#)."

alleviate the strain on our hospital workforce, build a future pipeline, and broaden access to health care across the state.

For these reasons, we ask for a *favorable* report on SB 359.

For more information, please contact:

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