



Maryland
Hospital Association

**Senate Bill 72-
Health Occupations Boards - English Proficiency Requirements and Licensure by
Endorsement for Nursing**

Position: *Support*
January 28, 2025
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 72.

Registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and nursing assistants make up 42% of Maryland's hospital workforce. The latest hospital data from Q3 2024 show licensed practical nurses, nursing assistants, and registered nurses have high vacancy rates—28%, 17%, and 15%, respectively. These vacancies mean fewer caregivers at the bedside, limiting capacity to care for patients. Removing barriers for internationally educated health care providers who already have experience working in other states will increase the number of experienced health care workers in Maryland and can help with retention by reducing the high vacancies.

SB 72 ensures licensed health care workers coming from other states can apply for a license to practice in Maryland without having to take an English proficiency test. This legislation will make Maryland more competitive by removing a significant barrier for internationally educated health care workers.

Maryland hospitals continue to hire internationally educated nurses. These nurses are experienced and bring diversity through language, culture, and experience to our health care workforce. In 2023, the General Assembly passed Senate Bill 187/House Bill 454, which removed the social security number requirement when applying for a health occupations license. This change allowed internationally educated nurses to obtain their initial U.S. registered nurse license in Maryland instead of another state. Not only did this help lower expenses incurred by these nurses, but it also helped decrease the amount of time they spend waiting to deliver care at the bedside.

SB 72 builds on positive changes from SB 187/HB 454 by removing barriers that prevent qualified health care workers from coming to practice in Maryland.

For these reasons, we request a favorable report on SB 72.

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