



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 9, 2023

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

Re: Letter of Support- House Bill 19- State Board of Examiners of Psychologists- License and Registered Issuance and Renewals- Electronic Means

Dear Chair Peña:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of House Bill 19.

HB 19 takes steps to streamline the licensure process for psychologists. Streamlining the licensure and credentialing process can reduce administrative barriers and support the health care workforce.

There is a growing need for behavioral health services in the community. Between 2013 and 2021, emergency department visits for behavioral health conditions climbed from 10.5% to 18.3%. Patient acuity also increased—meaning, there were more patients turning to emergency departments in crisis, and they were sicker when they got there.¹

Hospital emergency departments are often the first point of contact or the facility of last resort for individuals suffering from a behavioral health crisis. Patients and families turn to an emergency department for care when they cannot find treatment in the community or when the condition worsens.

Maryland is facing a critical staffing shortage across health care occupations. 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. Removing barriers to licensure is critical to expand Maryland's workforce pipeline. Legislation like HB 19 is a model for how health occupations boards can reduce barriers and support the health care workforce.

For these reasons, we request a *favorable* report on HB 19.

For more information, please contact:
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¹ HSCRC Case Mix Data