



Maryland  
Hospital Association

February 16, 2023

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

Re: Letter of Support- House Bill 196 - Health Occupations – Service Members, Veterans, and Military Spouses - Temporary Licensure, Certification, Registration, and Permitting

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk:

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 196.

Maryland hospitals are facing the most critical staffing shortage in recent memory. 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 for policymakers is to leverage the proximity to the state's military bases by launching a "Green to Blue" campaign to enable the timely transition of discharged and retired military personnel with caregiver experience. We must invite every qualified health care worker to join the workforce. The training and expertise this population has is valuable. Easing the transition to working in a civilian capacity would benefit the entire health care system.

HB 196 would expedite licensure for qualifying service members, veterans, and military spouses by issuing a temporary license. Additionally, the bill requires each health occupations board to collect data, including the number of applications received, number processed, number not processed, and the reason for delayed processing. This data can help identify other barriers.

The state has taken steps to support members of the military, veterans, and their families through past legislation. Additionally, several health occupations boards offer expedited licensing, and some offer temporary licenses. However, states like Virginia have robust programs that provide support throughout the process.<sup>1</sup> HB 196 can ensure Maryland does not lose qualified health care workers to neighboring states.

For these reasons, we request a *favorable* report on HB 196.

For more information, please contact:  
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<sup>1</sup> Virginia Department of Veterans Services. "[Military Medics and Corpsmen Program](#)."