



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 22, 2023

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

Re: Letter of Support - House Bill 475- Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Compact

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 475.

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.

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 allows for interstate reciprocity for RNs and LPNs. Yet, advanced practice nurses fall through the gaps. It has taken months, and in some extreme cases, a year with the current Board of Nursing licensure system to license an advanced practice nurse.

HB 475 would solve this problem and strengthen Maryland's health care workforce by allowing interstate reciprocity. 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. We have observed how effective compacts are for nurses and physicians. Delaware passed the compact last year—making it the third state to do so. Five states, including Maryland, are pending legislation.¹ Given the critical workforce shortage, having Maryland participate in this compact would alleviate the strain on our current workforce and build a future pipeline.

For these reasons, we request a *favorable* report on HB 475.

For more information, please contact:

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