



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 24, 2021

To: The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair, House Health & Government Operations Committee

Re: Letter of Support- House Bill 540- Interstate Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact

Dear Chair Pendergrass:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on House Bill 540. Maryland hospitals support measures that strengthen our health care workforce. Streamlining the process for occupation therapists to be licensed in multiple states could improve access to care, particularly for specialized services.

The American Occupational Therapy Association, in partnership with the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy, and the Council of State Governments, created an interstate professional licensing compact for occupational therapy to address licensure portability. The compact is intended to facilitate interstate practice of occupational therapy to improve access to these services. An interstate licensing compact *would not* change state statutes for occupational therapy or the scope of practice.

States that participate in the Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact must pass identical legislation. The compact takes effect once 10 states enact legislation. We believe well over 10 states want to join the Compact to fill workforce shortages during the COVID-19 pandemic. We need willing providers to be licensed and ready to serve our communities.

An interstate licensure compact for the occupational therapy profession has proven to:

- Improve consumer access to occupational therapy
- Increase opportunities to practice across state lines (e.g., telehealth, telerehabilitation, distance education)
- Improve continuity of care and preserve and strengthen the state licensure system

This committee passed similar legislation to ensure nurses and doctors have similar compacts, which have been successful. We urge the committee's favorable report on this bill to ensure occupational therapy is accessible for Marylanders.

For more information, please contact:

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