



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 10, 2022

To: The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair, Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee

Re: Letter of Support - Senate Bill 154 - Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Compact

Dear Chair Pinsky:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 154.

For more than 700 days, our hospital heroes have been on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. During that time, workforce shortages have grown untenable. Now we are at crisis levels with a staggering 50% jump in hospital nurse vacancies in just five months. That means fewer caregivers at the bedside, limiting capacity to care for patients, both those with COVID-19 and those having other serious conditions such as cancer.

Under the Governor's executive orders during the 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 their critical care units.

When the most recent public health emergency expired this month, so did the ability for nurse practitioners to work in state using an active out-of-state license. The Board of Nursing issued emergency regulations and allows an emergency exception for interstate reciprocity for RNs and LPNs, yet advanced practice nurses fall through the gaps.

SB 154 would solve this problem and strengthen Maryland's health care workforce by establishing an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Compact to allow 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. Given the critical workforce shortage and advanced training these providers must obtain, 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 SB 154.

For more information, please contact:
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