



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 1, 2022

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

Re: Letter of Support- Senate Bill 230- Health Occupations – Service Members, Veterans, and Military Spouses- Temporary Licensure, Certification, Registration, and Permitting

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 230. Maryland has a staggering health care workforce crisis. As an example, there are approximately 3,900 nursing vacancies in Maryland hospitals—a 50% increase since August 2021. The public health emergency declaration allows for additional flexibilities to utilize qualified health care providers, including retired health care professionals, professionals licensed in another state, and students, to supplement existing staffing. However, this workforce crisis will likely extend beyond the declared emergency.

MHA's Executive Committee established the Task Force on the Future of Maryland's Health Care Workforce, which includes hospital clinical and human resource leadership. This group will recommend state support needed to ensure we have the health care workforce to meet the needs of patients now and into the future. One strategy already discussed is a "Green to Blue" initiative to create opportunities for retired or near retired military veterans and their spouses, who qualify to quickly obtain a Maryland professional license.

This solution is in line with SB 230, which requires health occupation boards to issue an expedited temporary license to service members, veterans, and military spouses who have a valid license, certificate, or registration in good standing issued in another state. Streamlining the licensing process for these health professionals leverages their expertise and could improve access to care, particularly for specialized services.

Long-term we must build the pipeline of health care professionals to resolve our health care workforce crisis. Breaking down historic barriers for certain populations to enter the profession is necessary to meet the care needs of the entire population.

For these reasons, we urge a *favorable* report on SB 230.

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