

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 117

(Delegate Barron, *et al.*)

Health and Government Operations

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

State Board of Pharmacy - Licensure Requirements for Pharmacists - Proof of
Proficiency in English

This bill establishes alternate means of determining proficiency in the oral communication of the English language for purposes of the examination and licensing procedures of the State Board of Pharmacy. Specifically, the board must accept as proof of proficiency graduation from a recognized English-speaking professional school accredited by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill does not materially affect governmental operations or finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The board must require, as part of its examination or licensing procedures, an applicant for a pharmacist license to demonstrate an oral competency in the English language by passing a board-approved standardized test of oral competency. The board must adopt regulations that establish alternative procedures for applicants with a speech or hearing impairment. If any disciplinary charge or action relating to oral communication in English is brought against a licensee, the board must require the licensee to pass a board-approved standardized test of oral competency. The board may not require an applicant for a pharmacist license previously licensed in another state to demonstrate oral

competency in English if the other state in which the applicant was licensed had a similar oral competency requirement at the time the individual was licensed.

Background: Each applicant for a pharmacist license must pass the test of oral English competency. The board currently uses the Berlitz Language Center, which offers a proficiency interview designed to measure the active oral communicative ability of individuals in a workplace environment.

According to the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, the bill makes English proficiency requirements for pharmacists similar to those required by the State Board of Nursing and the State Board of Physicians for their licensees. It also allows pharmacists to have an alternative method for demonstrating competency other than the current test, which requires applicants to pay a fee.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 469 (Senator McFadden) – Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

Information Source(s): University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 26, 2016
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