



Maryland  
Hospital Association

February 3, 2022

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

Re: Letter of Support - House Bill 173 - State Board of Social Work Examiners - Temporary License to Practice Social Work

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 173.

Maryland has a staggering health care workforce crisis. As an example, there are more than 3,900 nursing vacancies in Maryland hospitals—a 50% increase since August 2021. The public health emergency declaration granted additional flexibilities to utilize qualified health care providers, including retired health care professionals, those licensed in another state, and students, to supplement existing staffing.

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.

HB 173 would allow the State Board of Social Work Examiners to issue temporary licenses to individuals who meet the qualifications for licensure except for passing the required examination. Hospitals employ social workers to support the needs of behavioral health patients, assist with case management and care coordination, and more. Reducing the time from graduation to practice for qualified social workers, with appropriate supervision, would help support the needs of Maryland's health workforce.

For these reasons, we would request a favorable report on HB 173.

For more information, please contact:  
Erin Dorrien, Director, Government Affairs & Policy  
Edorrien@mhaonline.org