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February 7, 2023

To: The Senate Finance Committee

From: Adventist HealthCare

Re: SB187 Health Occupations - Licenses, Certificates, and Registrations – Immigrants

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

Like all hospitals in Maryland and across the nation, Adventist HealthCare is facing a critical staffing shortage. With three nationally accredited acute-care hospitals, a nationally accredited rehabilitation hospital, and being the second largest provider of behavioral health care in Maryland, AHC supports SB187 which will allow hospitals to tap into the pipeline of international healthcare workers to help address this significant workforce issue.

Senate Bill 187 ensures every qualified health care professional can apply for a license to practice in Maryland. This legislation will make the state more competitive by removing a significant barrier for internationally educated nurses. The sponsor's amendments allow alternative identification to be used to obtain a health occupations license, including an individual taxpayer identification number or alternative documentation as permitted by the federal Social Security Act. The amendments also prohibit the health occupations boards from requiring a SSN or ITIN as a condition of licensure or certification if the applicant does have one.

Current policy places Maryland at a disadvantage when attracting international nurses. For an international nurse to work in Maryland they must first obtain a license in another state and then endorse their license here. This is a lengthy and expensive process and encourages nurses to seek licensure in other states with fewer barriers.

AHC is pursuing multiple strategies to recruit and retain our workforce such as increasing compensation and offering loan forgiveness. We are also developing training programs to increase the supply of clinical support employees. Accessing the international pipeline of workers is a critical component to ensuring we can continue to adequately staff our facilities and ensure access to care for our communities.

For these reasons Adventist HealthCare supports SB187 and encourages the committee to give a **favorable report**.

