



TO: The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair  
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee  
The Honorable Lesley J. Lopez

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
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DATE: February 22, 2023

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 454 – *Health Occupations – Licenses, Certificates, and Registrations – Immigrants*

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The Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers (MACHC) is the federally designated Primary Care Association for Delaware and Maryland Community Health Centers. As the backbone of the primary care safety net, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) are united by a shared mission to ensure access to high-quality health care to all individuals, regardless of ability to pay. FQHCs are non-profit organizations providing comprehensive primary care to the medically underserved and uninsured. MACHC supports its members in the delivery of accessible, affordable, cost effective, and quality primary health care to those most in need. To this end, MACHC **supports** House Bill 454.

House Bill 454 prohibits a professional board from denying a license to an immigrant if the person otherwise meets all educational, training, and professional requirements for licensure. An “immigrant” is defined as an individual whose country of origin is one other than the United States and who is not a citizen but is a resident of the State.

The State’s workforce challenges have existed for some time but have been greatly exacerbated during the public health emergency. Passage of House Bill 454 serves two critical objectives. Not only will it provide employment opportunities for qualified health care practitioners, but it will also assist the State in addressing its workforce challenges. Because the bill will allow only fully qualified practitioners to become licensed, regardless of immigration status, patients are ensured that the practitioners meet the same standards of education and training as any other practitioner licensed in Maryland. Passage of House Bill 454 increases access to employment and health care services. MACHC urges a favorable report.