

SUPPORT

HB 475 Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Compact

Chair Pena-Melnyk, Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

My name is Emalie Gibbons-Baker. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of House Bill 475. As an Advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) licensed as a Certified Nurse Midwife in Maryland, and as a board member of the Maryland Board of Nursing, I recognize the regulatory, practitioner and patient benefits of Maryland being a member of the APRN Compact.

For Regulators

Maryland has been a member of the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) for over twenty years. I have witnessed the benefits and safeguards built into the NLC to facilitate true mobility for registered nurses and licensed practical nurses while maintaining regulatory authority over practice in the state at the Maryland Board of Nursing. The APRN Compact is modeled after the NLC, once a multistate license is issued, the compact mandates communication among state nursing regulators to ensure safety and empowers regulators to act quickly in the case public protection is threatened.

Under the APRN Compact, licensing standards and disciplinary actions remain with Maryland. The commission that is formed upon the compact coming into effect is appropriately comprised of regulators from boards of nursing from each party state with the sole purpose to facilitate the operations and governance of the compact. The Commission has no power over advanced practice nursing practice, prescribing, or licensing standards. That power continues to rest solely with the state of Maryland, as it does with the NLC.

The Maryland Board of Nursing will realize efficiencies from joining the APRN Compact. Currently, the Board licenses APRNs from other states who need a Maryland license through the licensure by endorsement process. This process requires board staff to process the applicants and attached documentation to ensure they qualify for a Maryland license. The APRN Compact will reduce the staff time and resources to process these applications, as APRNs with a compact license issued in another state will not need to apply for licensure in Maryland.

This will free up staff time and resources to process initial licensure applicants for all Maryland nurses.

For Practitioners

The multistate license will enable APRNs across Maryland to practice across state lines, both in-person and electronically. This will immediately reduce the burdens for nurses who already obtain and maintain multiple licenses to provide care for their patients. A 2022 Maryland Board of Nursing survey found that 45% of APRN respondents already hold a license in more than one state. As more states join the compact, this will provide immediate financial and administrative relief for these practitioners.

As healthcare continues to advance and patients become more mobile, the APRN Compact allows APRNs to remain competitive in the rapidly expanding telehealth industry. Healthcare practitioners including physicians, physical therapists, psychologists, and physician assistants all have compacts that are currently operational or in early adoption stages. The APRN Compact is the solution for APRNs to gain the flexibility and mobility necessary for modern healthcare professionals, and APRNs across the state support the compact. The same 2022 survey found that 94% of APRN respondents are in favor of Maryland adopting the APRN Compact.

For Patients

For certified nurse midwives, the APRN Compact will help us reach more patients and provide continuity of care for our existing patients wherever they may be traveling or relocating at the time they need to access care. Patients from surrounding states, and from across the country, choose Maryland to receive excellent care at our clinics and institutions, both in-person and electronically. The compact will expand access to the excellent care CNMs provide without unnecessary geographic regulatory barriers.

For the regulatory benefits and benefits to practitioners and patients, the time for Maryland to join the APRN Compact is now. With the 2022 survey finding 72% of APRNs reported having provided APRN services outside of Maryland in the past 24 months, the need for licensure mobility through a safe and proven compact model warrants the passage of House Bill 475.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important issue.

Sincerely,

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