



Maryland
Hospital Association

March 30, 2023

To: The Honorable Joseline Peña-Melnyk, Chair, House Health & Government Operations Committee

Re: Letter of Support - Senate Bill 145 - State Board of Social Work Examiners - Temporary License to Practice Social Work

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of Senate Bill 145 as amended in the Senate.

Maryland hospitals are facing the most critical staffing shortage in recent memory. MHA's [2022 State of Maryland's Health Care Workforce report](#) outlines a roadmap to ensure Maryland has the health care workforce it needs now and into the future.

Hospitals employ social workers to support behavioral health patients and other vulnerable populations through case management, care coordination, and much more. Patients who face barriers transitioning out of the hospital to the next level of care, home or somewhere else, often rely on social workers to support them during this process. Pediatric patients experiencing hospital overstay also rely on social workers to advocate for resources and support.

As amended, SB 145 would allow the State Board of Social Work Examiners to issue a conditional license to individuals if an administrative delay prevents the applicant from taking the national exam for at least 15 business days. The bill allows the Board to issue a temporary license to individuals who qualify for licensure except for passing the required national exam. There are safeguards in place. For example, an individual working under a conditional license must work under supervision of a board-approved supervisor. Additionally, the bill limits the length of a conditional license to 180 days after the examination becomes available to the applicant.

Reducing the time from graduation to practice for qualified social workers would support Maryland's health workforce and provide essential support to patients in need. Social workers are a critical component of the health care workforce.

For these reasons, we would request a *favorable* report on SB 145.

For more information, please contact:
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