



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 9, 2023

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

Re: Letter of Support - House Bill 103 - 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 House Bill 103.

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 overstays also rely on social workers to advocate for resources and support.

HB 103 would allow the State Board of Social Work Examiners to issue temporary licenses to individuals who qualify for licensure except for passing the required examination. There are safeguards in place to limit the scope of these temporary licenses to individuals who are unable to access the licensing examination within seven days and who meet all other requirements. Additionally, the bill limits the length of a temporary license to 180 days after the examination becomes available to the applicant.

Reducing the time from graduation to practice for qualified social workers, with appropriate supervision, would support Maryland's health workforce and provide essential support to patients in need.

For these reasons, we would request a *favorable* report on HB 103.

For more information, please contact:
Jane Krienke, Senior Legislative Analyst