



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 1, 2024

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

Re: Letter of Support - House Bill 34 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 62 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of House Bill 34. 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.

This includes recommendations, like the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact, that would strengthen the hospital workforce and increase access to care.

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 rely on social workers to advocate for resources and support. Social workers provide invaluable behavioral health care in their communities as well as counsel and support to families whose loved ones are receiving health care services.

Joining the Social Work Licensure Compact would strengthen Maryland's health care workforce by allowing interstate reciprocity. Almost half of states have pending legislation to join the Social Work Licensure Compact.¹ Given the critical workforce shortage, Maryland's participation in this compact would alleviate the strain on our workforce and build a future pipeline.

For these reasons, we request a *favorable* report on HB 34.

For more information, please contact:
Jane Krienke, Senior Legislative Analyst, Government Affairs
Jkrienke@mhaonline.org

¹ <https://swcompact.org/compact-map/>