

SB217_LCPCM_FAV

Uploaded by: Andrea Mansfield

Position: FAV



Committee: Senate Finance Committee
Bill: SB 217 - Health Occupations Boards - Membership Alteration and Sunset Extensions
Hearing Date: January 21, 2025
Position: Support

The Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors of Maryland (LCPCM) support SB 217 Health Occupations Boards - Membership Alteration and Sunset Extensions. This bill extends the operations of the State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists (BOPCT), as well as several other boards until July 1, 2031.

As professionals regulated by the BOPCT, we see firsthand the benefit of the Board to the professionals it serves and the protection provided to the citizens of Maryland. The BOPCT promotes quality health care in the field of counseling and therapy by establishing standards and verifying the credentials of those who practice in Maryland. In addition, BOPCT receives, investigates, and resolves complaints of alleged violations of regulations and statutes.

LCPCM believes the continuation of the BOPCT is extremely important for the integrity of the profession and protection of the public. For these reasons LCPCM urges the Committee to give SB 217 a FAVORABLE Report.

Please contact Andrea Mansfield at amansfield@maniscanning.com or (410)562-1617 if we can provide additional information.

SB217_BoardPharmacy_FAV

Uploaded by: Deena Speights-Napata

Position: FAV



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

Maryland Board of Pharmacy
4201 Patterson Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21215

2025 SESSION POSITION PAPER

BILL NO: SB 217
COMMITTEE: Finance
POSITION: Support

TITLE: Health Occupations Boards - Membership Alteration and Sunset Extensions

BILL ANALYSIS: The bill, when enacted, extends the termination of the statutory and regulatory authority of several Health Occupation Boards, including the Maryland Board of Pharmacy, until July 1, 2030. The bill also increases the number of board member positions of the State Board of Massage Therapy Examiners from seven to nine.

POSITION AND RATIONALE: The Maryland Board of Pharmacy (the “Board”) supports SB 217.

Health Occupation boards are mandated by the General Assembly to protect the public health, well-being, and safety of the citizens of Maryland. A favorable vote to extend the termination date ensures that the Maryland Board of Pharmacy continues to fulfill its mission and mandated responsibilities to issue various types of licenses including, but not limited to, qualified and competent pharmacists and pharmacy technicians; investigate complaints; and discipline licensees found to have violated the Maryland Pharmacy Act. The Board also issues licenses for facilities including distributors and pharmacies.

For these reasons, the Maryland Board of Pharmacy respectfully requests a favorable vote on SB 217.

For more information, please contact the Board’s Executive Director, Deena Speights-Napata at deena.speights-napata@maryland.gov or call 410-764-4753.

The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.

SB217_FAV_AMTA.pdf

Uploaded by: Elly Cowan

Position: FAV

Chair Beidle and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

The American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) Maryland Chapter would like to offer our support for SB217. AMTA and the Maryland Board of Massage Therapy Examiners have collaborated extensively to enhance the professionalism, safety, and quality of massage therapy practice within the state of Maryland.

Together, we have increased the required education hours for massage therapists from 500 to 600, in 2014 and then from 600 to 750 in 2022, ensuring practitioners receive comprehensive training necessary to perform their work safely and effectively. This advancement aligns Maryland with national best practices and includes the adoption of Commission on Massage Therapy Accreditation (COMTA)-endorsed curricula for massage schools in the state.

Public safety has remained a cornerstone of our joint efforts. Initiatives have included:

- **Background Checks:** Instituting mandatory background checks for all aspiring massage therapists in 2015.
- **Fingerprinting Requirements:** Updating fingerprinting standards in 2021 to work with the Central Repository and allow the Maryland Board of Massage Therapy Examiners to receive criminal history updates promptly.
- **Establishment Licensure:** Empowering county-level governments to enforce establishment licensure requirements, bolstering oversight and regulation.
- **Aiding and Abetting Law:** Enacting the nation's first Aiding and Abetting Law to combat illegal activities within massage establishments.

The Board has demonstrated its commitment to evolving and refining regulatory standards to keep pace with the needs of both the public and the profession. Recent achievements include:

- **Recognizing Massage Therapy as Treatment:** Updating the definition of "massage therapy" in 2023 to classify it as a "treatment" under certain circumstances, further legitimizing the profession.
- **Insurance Coverage Reform:** Closing loopholes in 2022 that previously allowed insurance providers to deny coverage for massage therapy services.

The Maryland Board of Massage Therapy Examiners remains steadfast in its mission to make massage therapy in Maryland safer for the public while elevating the profession. Our collaborative efforts ensure that Maryland's massage therapists are among the most educated, knowledgeable, and professional practitioners in the field.

We thank you for your continued support of our efforts to advance the profession and protect the public, and we respectfully request a favorable report on SB217.

Sincerely,
Chelsea Adams-Cook
President, AMTA Maryland Chapter

SB217_CounselorsBd_FAV

Uploaded by: karen katrinic

Position: FAV



Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

Maryland Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists
4201 Patterson Avenue, #5
Baltimore, MD 21215

2025 SESSION
POSITION PAPER

BILL NO: SB 217
COMMITTEE: Finance
POSITION: Support

TITLE: Health Occupations Boards - Membership Alteration and Sunset Extensions

BILL ANALYSIS: The bill, when enacted, extends the termination of the statutory and regulatory authority of several Health Occupation Boards, including the Maryland Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists, until July 1, 2031. The bill also increases the number of board member positions of the State Board of Massage Therapy Examiners from seven to nine.

POSITION AND RATIONALE: The Maryland Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists (the “Board”) supports SB 217.

Health Occupation boards are mandated by the General Assembly to protect the public health, well-being, and safety of the citizens of Maryland. A favorable vote to extend the termination date ensures that the Maryland Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists continues to fulfill its mission and mandated responsibilities to credential, license, and certify qualified and competent counselors and therapists; investigate complaints; and discipline licensed and certified counselors and therapists found to have violated the Maryland Professional Counselors and Therapists Act.

For these reasons, the Maryland Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists respectfully requests a favorable vote on SB 217.

For more information, please contact the Board’s Legislation/Regulations Committee Chair, Karen Katrinic at karen.katrinic@maryland.gov or call 410-533-1991; or the Board’s Legislative Liaison, Lillian Reese at lillian.reese@maryland.gov or call 443-794-4757.

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SB217_BoardAudiology_FAV

Uploaded by: Keena Stephenson

Position: FAV



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

Board of Examiners for Audiologists,
Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language
Pathologists & Music Therapists
4201 Patterson Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21215

2025 SESSION POSITION PAPER

BILL NO: SB 217
COMMITTEE: Finance
POSITION: Support

TITLE: Health Occupations Boards - Membership Alteration and Sunset Extensions

BILL ANALYSIS: The bill, when enacted, extends the termination of the statutory and regulatory authority of several Health Occupation Boards, including the Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists and Music Therapists (the “Board”) until July 1, 2031. The bill also increases the number of board member positions of the State Board of Massage Therapy Examiners from seven to nine.

POSITION AND RATIONALE:

The Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists and Music Therapists is in full support of SB 217.

The Board greatly desires the continuation of all regulatory and statutory authority, as it relates to the provisions set forth by the Maryland Program Evaluation Act (sunset law). An extension is imperative to allow the Board to execute the delegated responsibilities of licensure and discipline. The Board serves a steadily increasing workforce population and provides support to over 6,000 occupation health professionals.

The State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists and Music Therapists, respectfully requests a favorable report on SB 217.

Thank you for your consideration. If you should require anything further, please contact Keena Stephenson, Executive Director, at keena.stephenson1@maryland.gov, or 443.832.0597, or Lillian Reese, the Legislative Liaison for the boards at lillian.reese@maryland.gov or at 443-794-4757.

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Uploaded by: Maryland State of

Position: FAV



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

January 21, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: Senate Bill (SB) 217 – Health Occupations Boards - Membership Alteration and Sunset Extensions – Letter of Support

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of support for Senate Bill (SB) 217 - Health Occupations Boards - Membership Alteration and Sunset Extensions – Letter of Support.

SB 217 extends the termination provisions relating to the statutory and regulatory authority of the Board of Pharmacy to July 1, 2030. The bill will also extend the termination provisions relating to the statutory and regulatory authority of the following Boards to July 1, 2031: The Board of Massage Therapy Examiners, The Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists, The Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists and The Behavior Analyst Advisory Committee within the Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists. Additionally, the bill will add two new members to the Massage Therapy Board, one member who is a licensed massage therapist, and one who is a consumer. Health Occupations Boards are mandated by the General Assembly to protect the public health, well-being and safety of the citizens of Maryland. Extending the termination provisions of these boards will ensure they can continue to fulfill their responsibilities such as credentialing and licensing qualified and competent professionals, and disciplining licensed professionals found to have violated their respective rules of conduct.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Health respectfully requests a favorable vote on SB 217. If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary

SB217_BoardMassageTherapists_FAV

Uploaded by: Sharon Oliver

Position: FAV



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

Maryland Board of Massage Therapy Examiners
4201 Patterson Avenue, Suite 301
Baltimore, MD 21215

2025 SESSION POSITION PAPER

BILL NO: SB 217
COMMITTEE: Finance
POSITION: Support

TITLE: Health Occupations Boards - Membership Alteration and Sunset Extensions

BILL ANALYSIS: The bill, when enacted, extends the termination of the statutory and regulatory authority of several Health Occupation Boards, including the State Board of Massage Therapy Examiners, until July 1, 2031. The bill also increases the number of board member positions of the State Board of Massage Therapy Examiners from seven to nine.

POSITION AND RATIONALE: The State Board of Massage Therapy Examiners (the “Board”) supports SB 217.

Health Occupation boards are mandated by the General Assembly to protect the public health, well-being, and safety of the citizens of Maryland. A favorable vote to extend the termination date ensures the State Board of Massage Therapy Examiners continues to fulfill its mission and mandated responsibilities to credential and license qualified, competent massage professionals; investigate complaints; and discipline licensed massage therapists and registered massage practitioners found to have violated the Maryland Massage Therapy Act. Furthermore, the State Board of Massage Therapy Examiners has no outstanding deficiencies to correct.

With regard to expanding the board membership of the State Board of Massage Therapy Examiners, the Board believes that this would improve governance, efficiency, decision-making on disciplinary cases, diversity of thoughts, and innovation.

For these reasons, the State Board of Massage Therapy Examiners respectfully requests a favorable vote on SB 217. For more information, please contact Sharon J. Oliver, Executive Director at 410-764-5985 or sharon.oliver@maryland.gov, or Lillian Reese, the Legislative Liaison for the boards at 443-794-4757 or at lillian.reese@maryland.gov.

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2025 SB217 Opposition Health Occupations Boards.pd

Uploaded by: Deborah Brocato

Position: UNF



Opposition Statement SB217

Health Occupations Boards – Membership Alteration and Sunset Extensions

Deborah Brocato, Legislative Consultant

Maryland Right to Life

On behalf of our over 200,000 followers, Maryland Right to Life opposes this legislation which extends the provisions of the Maryland Program Evaluation Act from the years 2025 and 2026 to the years 2030 and 2031 for certain Health Occupations. We request an amendment to clearly state that this legislation would not be used to further promote and provide abortion and abortion related services nor be used to seek increased funding for abortion and abortion related services. Without the amendment, we request an unfavorable report for SB217.

Maryland Right to Life opposes SB217 in that the State, through the Maryland Program Evaluation Act, interferes in the independent operations of the State Boards for healthcare professionals. In this case, we are particularly concerned with the State Board of Pharmacy and the State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists. Marylanders should be able to trust that their medications and counseling needs are in the hands of the professionals with the best possible educational standards for those particular healthcare specialties and that all standards exist for the protection and best outcomes of the client. The Maryland General Assembly has steadily passed legislation that lowers standards of care by expanding scope of practice and decreasing or removing licensing requirements for multiple healthcare occupations. Maryland Right to Life recognizes that the abortion industry uses these lax standards to prey on women and girls with a workforce that is less educated and less skilled in medical practice.

We oppose any bill that lowers the standards of practice of any health care provider or occupation without excluding abortion and abortion funding. Scarcity of health care professionals is not a reasonable excuse to lower standards of practice. This bill extends the interference of the State in the operations of medical boards and allow the continued promotion of abortion and abortion services over any other service that might be in the best interest of the women and girls of Maryland.

Maintain and/or adopt reasonable health and safety standards. The Abortion Care Access Act and now the Reproductive Freedom Amendment put profits over patients in the name of “access” and “reproductive freedom.” Health Occupations Boards need to have the independence to evaluate their healthcare professionals based on science and best medical practices for the client and not based on profits or an ideological agenda.

“D-I-Y Abortion drugs – Legislators allow reckless public health policies that authorize the unregulated proliferation of chemical abortion pills where women and girls are prescribed these lethal pills via telehealth without the benefit of a physician’s examination. The State Board of Pharmacy needs to have the independent ability to evaluate the risks and benefits how these pills are dispensed and determine what is best practice for the public.



Professional Counselors and Therapists must be allowed to provide individual, client-centered treatment without the interference of non-science based ideology. The State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists must be able to act independently to evaluate its members based on client outcomes and not pre-determined opinions and ideologies from the State. Abortion services should not be seen as the first line of treatment for a pregnant woman seeking mental health services.

State concerns must be for the protection of the patients from harm and not for the determination of treatment pathways. Treatment pathways are determined by the healthcare professional with the patient.

For these reasons, Maryland Right to Life respectfully asks for an amendment to exclude this bill being used in any way for abortion purposes, referrals or otherwise nor for any type of increased funding. We ask that the Maryland Program Evaluation Act be prevented from incorporating an abortion-minded agenda into their evaluations of Health Occupations Boards and allow the term to expire. Without an amendment, we ask for an unfavorable report on SB217.