



March 14th, 2025

Maryland Assembly Health and Government Operations Committee

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and all distinguished members of the Maryland Assembly Health and Government Operations Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on SB72, adjusting the additional English language competency requirement for nurses. My name is Alicia Plemmons, PhD, and I am an assistant professor and director of health in the Knee Regulatory Research Center at West Virginia University. This comment is not submitted on behalf of any party or interest group.

My research studies patient outcomes in terms of safety, quality, cost, and access under different practice agreements and sets of licensure requirements. My team measures changes in access to practitioners and the quality of care received as different license requirements are changed.

While the data changes slightly by type of nurse, let's analyze one of the most common types- Registered Nurses. To take the national examinations and complete U.S. based educational programs, applicants have already been tested for English language competency at several stages in their licensure journey. Requiring it as a separate verification adds time and costs to obtaining a license in a drastically understaffed role. So far, six states have removed the requirement for a separate English language competency test or certification, instead deferring to the national examination standards. The proposed policy would allow Maryland to forego additional evidence of English proficiency if the nurse has already been judged proficient at different stages or under licensure in a different state.

The states who have passed similar laws have been able to process licensure applications faster, especially for new graduates and registered nurses coming from bordering states. Allowing the same for Maryland would allow for faster processing and better access for Marylanders to timely healthcare.

Best regards,