



Board of Nursing

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D., Secretary

February 25, 2026

The Honorable Heather Bagnall
Chair, Health Committee
240 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB 771 – Health Occupations - Human Trafficking Awareness Training – Letter of Support with Amendments

Dear Chair Bagnall and Committee Members:

The Maryland Board of Nursing, the Maryland Board of Acupuncture, the Maryland Board of Chiropractic Examiners, the Maryland Board of Dental Examiners, the Maryland Board of Massage Therapy Examiners, the Maryland Board of Occupational Therapy Practice, the Maryland Board of Examiners in Optometry, the Maryland Board of Physical Therapy Examiners, the Maryland Board of Podiatric Medical Examiners, and the Maryland Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists (the “Boards”) respectfully submit this letter of support with amendments for HB 771 Health Occupations - Human Trafficking Awareness Training. This bill would require the boards to provide human trafficking awareness training for health occupations professionals and adopt regulations before October 1, 2026.

The Boards support the intent of HB 771 and recognize the importance of human trafficking awareness training for healthcare professionals given their proximity to vulnerable populations. Though there is still much more to be done, in recent years patient safety networks have developed procedures for addressing human trafficking when they encounter it, and nursing education programs, as well as other health occupation professions, often address the topic in their curriculum. Furthermore, we believe continuing education on the most recent developments in addressing human trafficking in the healthcare arena is an important step to eliminating the practice in the State altogether.

The Boards would like to present two amendments for the committee's consideration. The first would authorize boards to adopt regulations, rather than require adoption, thereby providing flexibility to implement the training through existing CE structures where feasible. Additionally, board regulations do not typically list courses and/or specific training for continuing education units (CEUs). The second amendment removes the deadline for completion of regulations by October 1, 2026, which the boards feel would be unnecessary language if amendment #1 is agreed to. The specific amendments are below.

- Pg 2, line 1, strike "shall" and substitute "may"
- Pg 3, strike lines 10-11 in their entirety

For all of these reasons, the Boards submit this letter of support with amendments for HB 771 and urge that the Committee adopt these amendments. For more information, please contact Ms. Mitzi Fishman, Director of Legislative Affairs, at 410-585-2049 or mitzi.fishman@maryland.gov, or Ms. Rhonda Scott, Executive Director, at 410-585-1953 or rhonda.scott2@maryland.gov; or Lillian Reese, Legislative Liaison for the Health Occupations Boards at 443-794-4757 or lillian.reese@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christine Lechlitter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christine Lechlitter
Board President

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