



# Board of Nursing

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Robert R. Neall,  
Secretary

February 26, 2020

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair  
House Health and Government Operations Committee Room  
241, House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

**RE: HB0639 - Public Health - Health Care Professionals - Cultural Competency Coursework or Training –Letter of Concern**

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Committee Members:

The Maryland Board of Nursing (“the Board”) submits this letter of concern for House Bill 639 (HB 639) - Public Health - Health Care Professionals - Cultural Competency Coursework or Training. This bill prohibits a hospital or related institution from employing or granting privileges to health care professionals who provide direct medical services to a patient, unless the health care professional completes coursework or training on cultural awareness and competence in the provision of medical services. This bill requires the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to adopt regulations that establish standards for coursework or training in consultation with the Cultural and Linguistic Health Care Professional Competency Program and organizations that represent professions, institutions, and individuals with expertise in cultural awareness and competence. HB 639 requires the Board to exempt a health care professional from training who clearly demonstrates to the satisfaction of the board that coursework or training is unnecessary because of the nature of the health care professional’s practice. The bill prohibits the Board from renewing the license of a health care professional who has not completed the coursework or training unless the Board has exempted the individual. The Board will be required to collect a \$5 fee from each licensee who is required to complete the coursework or training.

In order to comply with the requirements of HB 639, the Board would need to hire at least 1 full time employee for the purposes of tracking course completion by licensees as well as to analyze each petition for exemption to determine if the individual meets the criteria for exemption from taking the course. Additionally, the Board will incur a cost of \$40,000 - \$50,000 for vendor costs associated with updating its system in order to collect the \$5 fee due to the change in screens, programming logic, accounting and database that would need to occur.

The Board has additional concerns regarding how the criteria for the exemption “because of the nature of the health care professional’s practice” will be determined. MDH and the health occupations boards would either have to collaborate to promulgate uniform regulations for what

the criteria for this particular exemption from coursework and training should be or, each board would have to promulgate its own regulations identifying the exemption criteria for its licensees. HB 639 does not specifically address how this exemption criteria should be determined and therefore risks inconsistencies across the health occupations boards in awarding this exemption to licensees.

For the reasons discussed above, the Board of Nursing submits this letter of concern for HB0639.

For more information, please contact Rhonda Scott, Deputy Director, at (410) – 585 – 1953 ([rhonda.scott2@maryland.gov](mailto:rhonda.scott2@maryland.gov)) or Karen E. B. Evans, Executive Director, at (410) – 585 – 1914 ([karene.evans@maryland.gov](mailto:karene.evans@maryland.gov)).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gary N. Hicks". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Gary N. Hicks  
Board President

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