



Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Acting Secretary

Board of Physical Therapy Examiners
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**2021 SESSION
POSITION PAPER**

BILL NO: SB 517

COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

POSITION: Support

TITLE: State Board of Physical Therapy Examiners – Temporary Licenses to Practice Physical Therapy and Limited Physical Therapy

BILL ANALYSIS: This bill authorizes the State Board of Physical Therapy Examiners (the “Board”) to issue a temporary license to physical therapists (PT) and physical therapist assistants (PTA) who have been determined to be eligible for initial licensure but have not yet taken and passed the national licensure exam. Temporary licensure would allow these applicants to practice under the direct supervision of a licensed physical therapist for a limited period of time pending successfully passing the exam.

POSITION AND RATIONALE:

The Board supports SB 517. Granting PTs and PTAs the ability to practice under a temporary license will allow them to maintain competence between graduation and licensure and earn an income while studying for the national licensure exam. A number of nearby jurisdictions (including Pennsylvania, Delaware, Virginia, and the District of Columbia) have similar temporary licensure structures.

The Physical Therapy Practice Act previously allowed for temporary licensure but the statute was repealed when the national licensure exam was switched from a fixed-date schedule to a rolling schedule, meaning applicants could take the exam immediately after graduation. Now, however, the exam is again only offered on fixed dates, currently leading to a delay of at least six to twelve weeks between graduation and licensure. Temporary licensure would also help alleviate the impact of any delays in testing availability due to the current state of emergency or other unforeseen circumstances.

Because the bill passage would add a new licensure category for physical therapists and physical therapist assistants in Maryland, the Board will need to add a small fee for the temporary license to account for a proportional increase in operational requirements to review, approve, and issue

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applications and licenses. There is no anticipated fiscal or operational impact to the Department as a whole, other State agencies, or small business as a result of the proposed statutory changes.

For these reasons, the Board respectfully requests a favorable report on SB 517. Thank you for your consideration and if you have any additional questions, please contact the Board's Executive Director, Laurie Kendall-Ellis at laurie.kendall-ellis@maryland.gov or at 443-610-8047.

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