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TO: Finance Committee
FROM: LeadingAge Maryland
SUBJECT: Senate Bill 909, Health Occupations - Nursing Home Administrator -
Qualifications
DATE: March 17, 2022
POSITION: **Favorable**

LeadingAge Maryland supports Senate Bill 909, Health Occupations – Nursing Home Administrator - Qualifications

LeadingAge Maryland is a community of more than 135 not-for-profit aging services organizations serving residents and clients through continuing care retirement communities, affordable senior housing, assisted living, nursing homes and home and community-based services. Our mission is to expand the world of possibilities for aging in Maryland. We partner with consumers, caregivers, researchers, public agencies, faith communities and others who care about aging in Maryland.

This bill establishes an exception to the requirement that an individual be licensed by the State Board of Examiners of Nursing Home Administrators before the individual may practice in this State for a person who holds a license in another state and has certain level experience.

Nursing home administration is a challenging field with a reported annual turnover rate of 40 percent. Studies suggest the causes include red tape, roadblocks, an ever-changing field of regulations, emotional exhaustion, and cynicism, all confronted while trying to provide patients and residents the best possible quality of care. And, more than two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, the nursing home industry is facing a crisis that appears to only get worse as each year progresses. Attracting and retaining qualified nursing home administrators to run efficient nursing homes is critical. Nursing home administrators coordinate all of the administrative and clinical activities that directly contribute to patient or resident quality of care. As a nursing home administrator, responsibilities include everything from monitoring medical practices to overseeing facility operations to ensuring that your facility complies with all local and federal regulations. Given the workforce challenges along with the impact of COVID-19, Maryland needs statutory flexibility to license nursing home administrators.

Currently, a Maryland applicant seeking to obtain an Administrator License is required to undergo a 12-month full-time Administrator in Training (AIT) Program prior to being able to sit for the Maryland exam. There are times that that period of training time can be reduced by the board, but it is seldom reduced by more than 60 to 90 days. For example, a recent college graduate with a degree in healthcare administration would be required to train full-time for an entire year (totaling 2080 hours) before being permitted to take the exam to become a nursing home administrator. The required training in neighboring states is much less for an applicant with a health-related degree.

In an effort to recruit and retain nursing home administrators, LeadingAge Maryland fully supports the provisions of Senate Bill 909 that reduce training requirements and provide credit for work experience, Maryland must do more to address this growing gap in the industry. This bill appropriately permits an individual who holds an active nursing home administrator license, in good standing, in another state to practice in Maryland if the individual has a minimum of 3 years of experience as a nursing home administrator or 6 years of experience as an assistant nursing home administrator. That applicant must have completed 9 months (currently 1 year) of full-time nursing home administration in a nursing home or have completed 6 months of full-time nursing home administration in a nursing home and have completed an internship in a nursing home or assisted living program, and hold an active certification issued by the state board of nursing and have at least 10 years of experience at a nursing home, or have at least 3 years of experience as a director of nursing.

For these reasons, LeadingAge Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report for Senate Bill 909.

For additional information, please contact Aaron J. Greenfield, 410.446.1992