



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

March 17, 2022

Senate Bill 909: Health Occupations -
Nursing Home Administrator – Qualifications

POSITION: FAVORABLE

On behalf of our team of healthcare heroes at Marquis Health Consulting Services, we appreciate the opportunity to express our support for Senate Bill 909. Marquis Health Consulting Services operates a total of five skilled nursing and rehabilitation centers and two assisted living campuses in Maryland.

My name is Michael Smith RN, LNHA, and I am the Division President at Marquis Health Consulting Services, and a proud member of the HFAM Board of Directors. Most importantly, and a source of professional pride for me, I am both a registered nurse and a licensed nursing home administrator.

I feel fortunate to have begun my career in our sector by caring for patients and residents as a nursing assistant in Pennsylvania. I went on to become a Registered Nurse in 1996 and a licensed nursing home administrator in 2006. I am not a licensed nursing home administrator in Maryland because the current reciprocity provisions and Administrator-in-Training (AIT) program requirements make my quick licensure unlikely.

Pennsylvania has less strict licensure requirements than Maryland, so reciprocity is unlikely under the current law. To become licensed in Maryland, I would likely be required to take an AIT program of nine to twelve months despite my professional experience. I am not at a place in my career where that would be the best use of my strengths.

Marquis Health Consulting Services operates a total of 51 centers in seven states. Those states are Massachusetts, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Florida, Rhode Island, and New Jersey. Like most states, Maryland does provide for emergency provisional licensure of completely non-licensed individuals. However, Maryland's current law regarding reciprocity and the one-year AIT program is a barrier for companies like ours who operate in many states to bring in new talent to Maryland.

This proposed legislation would provide a clearly defined path for professionals working in nursing homes and healthcare to access licensure reciprocity, and to earn AIT credit for their professional experience, all while keeping in place the existing education and testing requirements.

This legislation authorizes an individual who holds an active nursing home administrator license in good standing in another state to practice in Maryland if the individual has three years of experience as an administrator or six years of experience as an assistant administrator. The State Board of Examiners of Nursing Home Administrators (BENHA) must waive any education requirements for an individual who was licensed, remains in good standing, and practiced as an administrator for at least three years in another state. In addition, this legislation authorizes an individual to satisfy criteria for licensure if they meet certain education and professional requirements.



In other words, Senate Bill 909 expands the nursing home administrator workforce by allowing for more interstate reciprocity of qualified individuals between states. It also removes barriers to entry by giving professional credit to applicants who are licensed and experienced in another role, and to applicants who have a degree in healthcare or aging.

Even before the pandemic, the long-term and post-acute care sector in Maryland did not have a deep bench of licensed nursing home administrators. A big part of that is due to the state-to-state differences in licensure and reciprocity.

Lastly, in public hearings and work sessions on the House version of this bill, HB 1241, some have stated that nursing assistants and nurses do not make good administrators. My career, and the careers of countless others who began as a nursing assistant or nurse and went on to become an administrator, proves otherwise.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report from the Committee on Senate Bill 909.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Smith', is written over a light green leaf graphic that is part of a larger decorative element in the bottom left corner of the page.

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