



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

**2022 SESSION
POSITION PAPER**

BILL NO.: SB 407 – Health Care Staffing Shortage Emergency – Declaration and Licensing and Practice Requirements (Health Care Heroes Act of 2022)
COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
POSITION: Support with Amendments

TITLE: Health Care Staffing Shortage Emergency – Declaration and Licensing and Practice Requirements (Health Care Heroes Act of 2022)

BILL ANALYSIS: Authorizes the Secretary of Health to declare a health care staffing emergency in the State and requires each health occupations board to establish processes for the issuance of initial and temporary licenses and temporary practice letters during a health care staffing shortage emergency.

POSITION & RATIONALE:

The Maryland Board of Physicians (the “Board”) is submitting this letter of support with amendments for Senate Bill 407 – Health Care Staffing Shortage Emergency – Declaration and Licensing Practice Requirements (Health Care Heroes Act of 2022).

The past two years have amply demonstrated the importance of maintaining a robust health care workforce, especially in times of crisis. The Board has complied with all executive orders issued during the COVID-19 pandemic and associated staffing shortages, and has worked with the Secretary of Health’s office to keep information about these orders public and accessible to all licensees and applicants.

Beyond the executive orders, the Board has worked hard to maintain full operations throughout the pandemic, and to develop processes to allow licenses to be issued as quickly as possible. The Board currently issues the majority of its licenses within ten days of receipt of the fully completed application. In addition, the Board has been working to develop multiple alternative pathways to licensure, including participating in the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact (“IMLC”), developing a uniform application process and working with medical boards in Virginia and the District of Columbia to discuss reciprocity agreements between these jurisdictions.

The Board supports measures to codify the ways in which health care staffing shortages may be addressed during a state of emergency. However, the Board is concerned that the language on page 4, lines 28 through 33, would require the Board to establish processes for the issuance of temporary health occupation licenses and temporary practice letters. The Board does not currently issue temporary licenses or practice letters. In reviewing the cost and effectiveness of issuing temporary licenses, the Board determined that doing so would represent a significant cost increase without materially decreasing the amount of time it takes to obtain a license.

Given that SB 407 also contains provisions requiring health occupations boards to develop processes to issue expedited licenses for initial applicants, out-of-state licensees, inactive licensees and retired licensees, the Board does not believe that requiring temporary licenses or practice letters for all health occupations boards is necessary. Therefore, the Board recommends the following amendment:

AMENDMENT 1

The Board recommends striking the word “AND” on page 4, line 30, and replacing it with the word “OR.”

Thank you for your consideration. For more information, please contact Matthew Dudzic, Health Policy Analyst, Maryland Board of Physicians, 410-764-5042.

Sincerely,



Damean W. E. Freas, D.O.
Chair, Maryland Board of Physicians

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