



Board of Nursing

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

March 7, 2022

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

RE: HB 1188 – Public Health – Sickle Cell Disease and Trait – Information for Individuals and Health Care Practitioners – Letter of Concern

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Committee Members:

The Maryland Board of Nursing (the Board) respectfully submits this letter of concern for House Bill (HB) 1188 – Public Health – Sickle Cell Disease and Trait – Information for Individuals and Health Care Practitioners. This bill requires the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to establish and implement a system of providing information on the sickle cell trait or the thalassemia trait to certain individuals; requires MDH to maintain on its website a certain list of resources for healthcare practitioners and establish a plan for updating its website to meet certain requirements; requires the State Board of Nursing and the State Board of Physicians to include certain information in the renewal notices sent to licensees.

The Board appreciates the Maryland General Assembly's efforts in raising awareness of sickle cell disease, sickle cell, and thalassemia traits by requiring MDH to establish a system and maintain a list of resources for healthcare practitioners and individuals afflicted by the disease's symptomatology. There are great concerns, however, with requiring particular health occupations boards to include information related to resources on sickle cell disease on renewal notices sent to license holders. It will be inappropriate and outside the scope of the Board to provide this information. The Board believes renewal notices should remain independent of any other subject matter. Notices should only serve as a friendly reminder for license and certificate holders to renew their license or certificate in a timely manner and prior to their expiration date.

Additionally, it is the professional responsibility of healthcare practitioners to maintain evidence-based knowledge of current standards of practice, including those for sickle cell disease. The Board believes that there are additional avenues that can promote awareness of the MDH's system and resources. For the reasons discussed above, the Maryland Board of Nursing respectfully submits this letter of concern for HB 1188.

I hope this information is useful. For more information, please contact Iman Farid, Health Policy Analyst, at (410) 585 – 1536 (iman.farid@maryland.gov) or Rhonda Scott, Deputy Director, at (410) 585 – 1953 (rhonda.scott2@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Hicks", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

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.