



Board of Dental Examiners

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

Arpana S. Verma Board Chair – Francis X. McLaughlin, Jr., Executive Director

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March 24, 2022

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

**Re: SB 230 – Health Occupations - Service Members, Veterans, and Military Spouses –
Temporary Licensure, Certification, Registration, and Permitting - Letter of Concern as
Amended**

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Committee Members:

The Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners is submitting this letter of concern as amended for Senate Bill (SB) 230 - Health Occupations - Service Members, Veterans, and Military Spouses - Temporary Licensure, Certification, Registration, and Permitting. The bill requires all health occupations boards, including the Dental Board, to issue a 6-month expedited temporary license, certificate, or registration to a service member, veteran, or military spouse who has applied for a full Maryland license, if the applicant has been licensed and in good standing in another state for at least one year. In addition, the bill allows a health occupations board to issue a 6-month expedited temporary license to a service member, veteran, or military spouse who has applied for a full Maryland license, and who has been licensed in another state for a period less than one year.

The amendment in the House does not alleviate the Board's concerns. The amendment (page 4, lines 10-14) provides:

EACH VALID LICENSE, CERTIFICATE, REGISTRATION, OR PERMIT HELD BY THE APPLICANT REQUIRED SUBSTANTIALLY SIMILAR QUALIFICATIONS AS THE LICENSE, CERTIFICATE, REGISTRATION, OR PERMIT FOR WHICH THE APPLICANT HAS APPLIED, AS DETERMINED BY THE HEALTH OCCUPATIONS BOARD.

The Board does not believe that there are “substantial equivalent” examination requirements in other states for either dentists or dental hygienists. In Maryland, a graduate of an accredited dental school may receive a license if he or she has, among other requirements, passed the American Dental Licensing Examination or the American Dental Hygiene Examination, both administered by the American Board of Dental Examiners, Inc.(ADEX). Those examinations are considered the “Gold Standard” of examinations. Although other states’ examination requirements may be facially similar, they are not “substantially equivalent.” In addition, determining that an examination or licensing requirement of another state is not ‘substantially equivalent’ is a subjective determination that may subject the Board to lengthy litigation. The Board notes that the ADEX examinations are offered and accepted in 48 states and are taken by the great majority of dentists and dental hygienists seeking licensure, regardless of where they initially considered licensure. If a candidate passed the ADEX examination in another state, the passing score is used for licensure in Maryland. Therefore, there

should be no obstacles for those seeking dental or dental hygiene licensure in Maryland, and no real need for a temporary license.

Under the present law, and for a number of years, the Dental Board has expedited the applications for licensure for all service members, veterans, and military spouses. In addition, each applicant has an advisor to assist with the application process. If the applicant does not meet the requirements for licensure the advisor assists the service member, veteran, or military spouse in identifying programs that offer the appropriate education or experience. The Board takes all reasonable steps to help servicemen and women and their spouses.

In addition, there are states that pose a concern. In New York, a candidate may receive a dental license without having taken a clinical examination, and in Delaware candidates for a dental license must take a state administered examination. Both situations raise clinical concerns. The Board does not believe that it is in the public interest to allow dentists who have not completed a rigorous clinical examination as part of the application process to practice while their application for a full license is pending, even for a period of 6 months.

Under the existing law, a dentist who has not passed the ADEX examination may be issued a full Maryland license if they have practiced dentistry in another state for at least 5 years and if they have passed an examination with a clinical component as a requirement for licensure in another state. It is the Board's belief that if a dentist has not passed the ADEX examination he or she should have the required 5 years of practice experience before they are allowed to practice dentistry in Maryland. Harm could be done to the citizens of Maryland during the temporary license period.

Additionally, the Board notes that the applicant may not attempt in earnest to complete the requirements for full licensure, may continue to request continuances for the temporary license, or simply practice without a license once the 6-month temporary license expires.

For these reasons, the Dental Board requests that SB 230 receive an unfavorable report.

I hope that this information is helpful. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact me at 240-498-8159, asverma93@gmail.com, or Dr. Edwin Morris, the Board's Legislative Committee Chair at 410-218-4203. In addition, the Board's Executive Director, Mr. Frank McLaughlin may be reached at 443-878-5253, frank.mclaughlin@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arpana S. Verma', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Arpana S. Verma, D.D.S.
Board President

The opinion of the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners expressed in this letter does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the administration.