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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SB 120 - State Acupuncture Board – Practice of Acupuncture – Education Requirements

Why SB 120 Is Needed:

- The current requirements to obtain an acupuncture license in Maryland through the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM) pathway is not in line with evolving industry standards and a majority of other states.
- Acupuncturists in Maryland can obtain licensure via an NCCAOM pathway by:
 - Acquiring a diploma in acupuncture from the NCCAOM, **or** a passing score on an examination that is determined by the Board to be equivalent to the examination given by the NCCAOM.
 - Acupuncturists are **the only** health profession in Maryland that **does not** require passage of a national certification exam.
 - Maryland is **one of only two states** that does not require acupuncturists to take the NCCAOM exam.
- This bill is not meant to address any competency concerns in Maryland’s current labor force of Acupuncturists who provide excellent services to Marylanders.
- The intent of SB 120 is to align the State of Maryland with evolving standards and best practices around the country regarding acupuncture and oriental medicine.

What SB 120 Accomplishes:

- An acupuncturist who is pursuing licensure via the NCCAOM pathway can obtain Maryland licensure with a diploma from an NCCAOM accredited program **and** a passing score on an exam deemed by the Maryland Board of Acupuncture to be equivalent to the NCCAOM exam.
- SB 120 includes an important grandfather clause that exempts these new standards for existing acupuncturists and applicants who achieve licensure prior to May 31, 2026. This ensures that the

implementation of this legislation does not interfere with the practice of existing licensees and current acupuncture students.

- SB 120 aligns Maryland's acupuncture licensure requirements with NCCAOM recommendations and national best practices.
- SB 120 strengthens the licensing requirements by establishing an objective framework to evaluate the proficiency of future acupuncture practitioners.
- SB 120 ensures that there is parity among the various health occupations regarding education and certification requirements.

Support for this Initiative:

- Maryland State Board of Acupuncture
- Maryland University of Integrative Health
- Maryland Acupuncture Society