



Board of Physicians

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Damean W.E. Freas, D.O., Chair

2023 SESSION POSITION PAPER

BILL NO.: SB 375 – State Board of Physicians – Inactive and Emeritus Status
COMMITTEE: Finance
POSITION: Letter of Support

TITLE: State Board of Physicians – Inactive and Emeritus Status

POSITION & RATIONALE:

The Maryland Board of Physicians (the Board) is submitting this letter of support for Senate Bill (SB) 375 – State Board of Physicians – Inactive and Emeritus Status. SB 375 would establish an emeritus status for retired physicians who are no longer practicing after providing healthcare to Maryland patients for at least 10 years.

Under current law, there is no way for a physician to indicate that they are retired on their license or practitioner profile. When a physician in Maryland ceases practicing, they are forced to choose between either allowing their license to lapse or continuing to renew it indefinitely. If the retired physician chooses to allow their license to lapse, they will show up on the Board’s practitioner profile as having an expired or inactive license, with no way to distinguish a retired physician with decades of service from any other practitioner who allowed their license to lapse.

Because of this, rather than allowing their license to lapse, many physicians continue to renew their license long after retirement. This makes it difficult to obtain a clear picture of the physician workforce in Maryland. For example, as part of its participation in several healthcare workforce initiatives, the Board has been asked on multiple occasions to speak to the impact of aging on the Maryland physician workforce. Unfortunately, while the Board knows that over 12% of its actively licensed physicians are over 70 years of age, and over 19% are between ages 60 and 69, the Board has no way of knowing how many of these licensees are currently practicing.

By establishing an emeritus status, SB 375 would alleviate these issues by giving retired physicians with at least a decade of service in Maryland the ability to indicate their retirement with honor on their professional license. This status would allow retired physicians to retain their professional title as an honor. Emeritus physicians would not be permitted to engage in the practice of medicine, including prescribing and dispensing medication, and would be exempt from renewal and continuing medical education requirements. Emeritus status would be entirely voluntary and any emeritus physician who wishes to return to practice would be required to reinstate their license, under the same standards as inactive physicians. This change would bring Maryland in line with other states such as California and Maine that offer similar options for retired physicians.

SB 375 would allow the physicians who have dedicated their lives to serving Maryland patients the option of retiring with grace, while also giving the Board a more robust and nuanced picture of its current healthcare workforce. The Board urges a favorable report on SB 375.

Thank you for your consideration. For more information, please contact Matthew Dudzic, Manager of Policy and Legislation, 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.