

SB 349- State Board of Examiners of Psychologists-

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Maryland
Hospital Association

February 14, 2023

To: The Honorable Melony G. Griffith, Chair, Senate Finance Committee

Re: Letter of Support- Senate Bill 349- State Board of Examiners of Psychologists- License and Registered Issuance and Renewals- Electronic Means

Dear Chair Griffith:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of House Bill 19.

HB 19 takes steps to streamline the licensure process for psychologists. Streamlining the licensure and credentialing process can reduce administrative barriers and support the health care workforce.

There is a growing need for behavioral health services in the community. Between 2013 and 2021, emergency department visits for behavioral health conditions climbed from 10.5% to 18.3%. Patient acuity also increased—meaning, there were more patients turning to emergency departments in crisis, and they were sicker when they got there.¹

Hospital emergency departments are often the first point of contact or the facility of last resort for individuals suffering from a behavioral health crisis. Patients and families turn to an emergency department for care when they cannot find treatment in the community or when the condition worsens.

Maryland is facing a critical staffing shortage across health care occupations. MHA's [2022 State of Maryland's Health Care Workforce report](#) outlines a roadmap to ensure Maryland has the health care workforce it needs now and into the future. Removing barriers to licensure is critical to expand Maryland's workforce pipeline. Legislation like HB 19 is a model for how health occupations boards can reduce barriers and support the health care workforce.

For these reasons, we request a *favorable* report on HB 19.

For more information, please contact:

Jane Krienke, Senior Legislative Analyst, Government Affairs
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Senate Finance Committee
3 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB0349 State Board of Examiners of Psychologists – License and Registration Issuance and Renewals-Electronic Means

Position: **Support**

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychological Association represents over 1000 doctoral level psychologists throughout the state. We write in **support of SB0349**, which would allow the State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (SBEP) to issue electronic licenses and registrations; repeal the requirement that the Board include certain information on each license and registration; and require the Board to send renewal notices by first-class mail if the electronic notice is returned as undeliverable, or on a specific request by the registrant.

This bill appears to be another important step towards increasing the efficient processing of individuals seeking licensure or registration in Maryland as psychologists or psychological associates. Specifically, SB0349 will make it easier and more efficient for psychologists and psychological associates seeking either a first-time license/registration or renewal of their license/registration. Moreover, it will allow the SBEP to streamline their own process by reducing the information required on the licensing/registration application and save money in printing costs and postage fees. This change would also make it easier for both the SBEP and applicants to more easily and accurately track the process of licensing/registering those who wish to practice psychology in Maryland. Finally, the change to electronic processing will allow anyone who would prefer to continue receiving licensing materials by mail to opt out of the new system by contacting SBEP.

For the reasons noted above the Maryland Psychological Association asks for a **FAVORABLE** report on SB0349.

Thank you for considering our comments on SB0349. If we can be of any further assistance as the Senate – Finance Committee considers this bill, please do not hesitate to contact MPA's Legislative Chair, Dr. Pat Savage at mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Resnik, Psy.D.

Rebecca Resnick, Psy.D.
President

R. Patrick Savage, Jr., Ph.D.

R. Patrick Savage, Jr., Ph.D.
Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

cc: Richard Bloch, Esq., Counsel for Maryland Psychological Association
Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs

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Board of Examiners of Psychologists

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Acting Secretary

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2023 SESSION POSITION PAPER

BILL NO: SB 349
COMMITTEE: Finance
POSITION: SUPPORT

TITLE: State Board of Examiners of Psychologists – License and Registration Issuance and Renewals – Electronic Means

BILL ANALYSIS: The proposed bill will authorize the State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (the Board) to cease printing and mailing paper licenses/registrations and permit those that hold an active license or registration to print verification of their status from the Board’s website. In addition, the Board will no longer have to mail renewal notices, except in exceptional circumstances, but allows the Board to email renewal notices.

POSITION AND RATIONALE:

The Board currently prints and mails licenses, registrations, and renewal notices. Using available electronic technology will expedite communication, improve accuracy, and are cost-saving measures.

Thank you for your time and support. The Board of Examiners of Psychologists respectfully asks for a favorable vote for SB 349. For more information, please contact Lorraine Smith, Executive Director at Lorraine.smith@Maryland.gov or at 410-764-4786.

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