



Board of Physicians

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 78
TITLE: Health Occupations – Service Members, Veterans, and Military Spouses – Temporary Licensure, Certification, Registration, and Permitting
COMMITTEE: Finance Committee
POSITION: Letter of Support with Amendments

TITLE: Health Occupations – Service Members, Veterans, and Military Spouses – Temporary Licensure, Certification, Registration, and Permitting

BILL ANALYSIS:

Senate Bill (SB) 78 requires certain health occupation boards, including the Maryland Board of Physicians (the Board), to issue an expedited temporary license to a service member, veteran, or military spouse who meets specific requirements. The bill also permits a health occupations board to apply to the Secretary of Health for approval of an alternate process for licensure that does not meet specific requirements.

POSITION AND RATIONALE:

The Board is submitting a Letter of Support with Amendments for SB 78. Under legislation passed in 2013, the Board has developed procedures to expedite all licenses for service members and spouses, and the process is working well to expedite such licensure. For example, 99% of licenses are issued within ten days of the Board receiving the last qualifying document.

The Board has established multiple pathways for expedited physician licensure, including participation in the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact and licensure by endorsement. Physicians who hold a valid license in another state, licensure by endorsement requires a brief application and a criminal history records check. Additionally, the Board has introduced online application processes and licensure by Uniform Application (UA) which allows physicians to apply for licensure in multiple states at a single time. The Federation Credentials Verification Service (FCVS) has also been implemented to verify physician credentials. Efforts are currently being made to fully transition to online applications for all practitioners licensed by the Board for a more streamlined licensure process. The Board, in November 2021, also approved the drafting of regulations to provide additional ease of licensure for service members and their spouses, which may include fee reductions and deferments of continuing education requirements during deployment.

The Board does not issue temporary licenses for any practitioners regulated by the Board. Issuing both temporary and full licenses will slow the process rather than expedite it. The expedited temporary license described in the bill essentially creates a new licensure category that would require two new Board positions (one licensure analyst for physicians and one for allied health

practitioners), an overhaul of the Board's licensure system, and Web-based practitioner profile system, and development of a new application for an expedited temporary license. The Board also would need to promulgate regulations.

The proposed bill does permit a health occupations board to apply to the Secretary of Health for approval of an alternate process for the expedited licensure of service members, veterans, and military spouses. However, the language of the bill does not provide any criteria or objective measures that must be met in order for an alternative process to be approved. Without such explicit provisions, there is no assurance that a board's alternative process would receive approval by the Secretary. In the absence of an approved alternate process, a health occupation board remains obligated to implement a new licensure system.

Therefore, the board recommends striking the language found on page 4, line 29 through page 5, line 6 and replacing it with “a health occupations board may apply to the secretary for exemption due to processes already in place that allows service members, veterans, and military spouses to obtain a license, certificate, registration, or permit under this article in an expedited manner that meets the goals of subsection (a) of this section.”

Thank you for your consideration. For more information, please contact for more information, contact:

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Sincerely,



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Chair, Maryland Board of Physicians

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