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To: Senate Finance Committee

Bill: SB 187 – Health Occupations - Licenses, Certificates, and Registrations – Immigrants

Date: February 7, 2023

Position: Support

The Maryland Dental Action Committee supports *Senate Bill 187 – Health Occupations – Licenses, Certificates, and Registrations – Immigrants*. The bill removes certain barriers to licensure for foreign-born health care practitioners who meet Maryland licensure requirements.

MDAC supports this legislation as part of a broader strategy to address health care professional shortages. Maryland has 62 areas considered dental provider shortage areas, also known as health professional shortage areas. We need an estimated 348 more dentists to meet the oral health needs of Marylanders.ⁱ

In this time of severe health professional shortages, we should be looking for every opportunity to recruit and retain qualified practitioners. Maryland law already allows for a limited license for foreign-trained dentists. However, qualified applicants may still face barriers license if they do not yet have a social security or individual tax identification number (ITIN).

Now more than ever, we need every qualified dental provider. Just one month ago, Maryland Medicaid began its adult dental coverage program to serve about 800,000 adults in Maryland. This coverage initiative was made possible by the Maryland General Assembly and Governor Hogan through joint legislative and budget action during the 2022 session. This is a tremendous opportunity to improve the health of Marylanders, but we need more dentists to serve Medicaid participants.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

Optimal Oral Health for All Marylanders

ⁱ <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/dental-care-health-professional-shortage-areas-hpsas/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

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