



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

Statement of Lynn A. Nash, PhD, RN, PHCNS-BC, FAAN
CAPT (R), U.S. Public Health Service
Communications Director

HB 278 – Health Occupations – Clinical Nurse Specialist - Prescribing **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENT**

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk and Honorable Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee.

For the record, my name is CAPT Lynn Nash, and I am the Communications Director for the Maryland Military Coalition. I am a clinical nurse specialist in Public and Community Health and I've held that certification since it was first established in 1980.

Maryland is experiencing its worst shortage in healthcare providers ever. The [2022 State of Maryland's Health Care Workforce Report](#) [Health Care Workforce Report](#), released by the Maryland Hospital Association (MHA), found that there is a **workforce crisis in Maryland's healthcare sector**. The report detailed that one in four hospital nursing positions are vacant, and also cited high staff turnover and an insufficient nursing pipeline.

Similarly, the [Maryland Hospital Association](#) found that overall **Maryland is 16 percent below** the national average for number of physicians available for clinical practice. **The most severe problems occur in rural parts of the state** such as Southern Maryland, Western Maryland and the Eastern Shore, and the physician shortage will get much worse by 2025, based on the study's results.

HB 278 authorizes a "clinical nurse specialist" (CNS) to "practice as a clinical nurse specialist" for the purpose of prescribing drugs and durable medical equipment (DME), among other things. The bill designates a CNS as an "authorized prescriber" under the Maryland Pharmacy Act. This prescriptive authority includes ordering labs and medications as well as durable equipment (like a walker or commode chair), initiating, monitoring and altering therapies and treatments as well as ordering entry into home care and hospice. I wholeheartedly support such a move to empower nurses who have the appropriate training and have passed their certification exams to practice within the full range of their scope of practice – we need them!

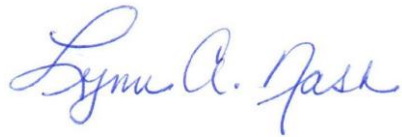
Maryland is home to approximately 390,000 veterans, 30,000 active-duty service members and 18,000 reservists/national guard members. In addition, there are 130,000 veteran households with children and another 60,000 reserve/national guard/active-duty dependents. They deserve access to care.

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The Maryland Military Coalition, is a voluntary, non-partisan organization representing 19 veteran service organizations who, in turn, serve over 150,000 Maryland uniformed services men, women and their families. The Coalition strongly supports House Bill 278 and asks for your ***favorable report.***

Thank you to Delegate Cullison for sponsoring this important legislation which recognizes the comprehensive scope of practice for clinical nurse specialists as well as advance practice nurses as full members of the healthcare team.

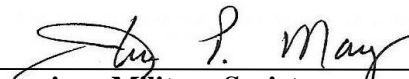
Respectfully,

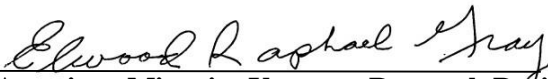
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Lynn A. Nash

Member Organizations, Maryland Military Coalition


Air Force Sergeants Association

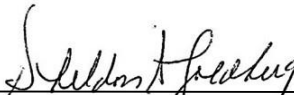

American Military Society

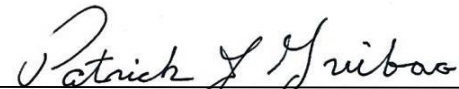

American Minority Veterans Research Project


Association of the United States Navy



Commissioned Officers Association of the
US Public Health Service


Disabled American Veterans



Distinguished Flying Cross Association


Fleet Reserve Association


Jewish War Veterans of the USA


Maryland Air National Guard Retirees'
Association


Military Officers Association of America


Military Order of the Purple Heart



Montford Point Marines of America


National Association for Black Veterans


Naval Enlisted Reserve Association


NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers


Reserve Organization of America


Society of Military Widows


Veterans of Foreign Wars