



TO: The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Lesley J. Lopez

FROM: Danna L. Kauffman
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DATE: February 22, 2023

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 454 – *Health Occupations – Licenses, Certificates, and Registrations – Immigrants*

On behalf of the LifeSpan Network, the Maryland Association of Adult Day Services, the Maryland-National Capital Homecare Association, and the Hospice and Palliative Care Network of Maryland, we respectfully **support** House Bill 454. The bill prohibits a professional board from denying a license to an immigrant, as defined in the bill, if the person otherwise meets all educational, training, and professional requirements for licensure.

As you know, Maryland is facing a critical health care worker shortage, which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. This shortage is affecting all industries, especially in the health care sector. Many health care providers, especially in long-term care, are not only competing with other health care providers to attract and retain employees but also retail and food establishments that can pay higher wages to employees. Maryland must implement initiatives that can increase the pool of qualified candidates.

Therefore, the above-named organizations support House Bill 454 as a reasonable approach that would allow additional individuals to become licensed or certified under the appropriate health occupations board. It is important to again emphasize that this bill does not dilute any requirements or standards that an individual must satisfy to become licensed or certified. It simply allows individuals to be considered for application who, under today's rules, are not currently permitted. For these reasons, we urge a favorable vote.