



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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

State Board of Acupuncture
State Board of Podiatric Medical Examiners
State Board of Social Work Examiners
4201 Patterson Avenue, Third Floor
Baltimore, MD 21215

2024 SESSION POSITION PAPER

BILL NO: HB 1201
COMMITTEE: Economic Matters
POSITION: Support with Amendment

TITLE: Occupational and Professional Licensing – Military Training and Military Spouses

BILL ANALYSIS: The proposed legislation would require the health professions boards and commissions to issue a license, certificate, permit and/or registration (practice credential) to a military trained applicant if he/she meets certain requirements, including completion of military training, the consideration of certain types of experience and licensure in another jurisdiction. The proposed legislation would additionally authorize the health professions boards and commissions to issue a temporary license, certificate, permit, and/or registration to applicants that hold a license in another jurisdiction.

POSITION AND RATIONALE: The State Board of Acupuncture, the State Board of Podiatric Medical Examiners, and the State Board of Social Work Examiners (the “Boards”) support HB 1201 with amendment.

The Boards are supportive of the intentional efforts to honor the service of and develop more actionable supports for military families by: (1) decreasing the barriers to employment in fields that require credentialing and (2) increasing the number of credentialed professionals available to provide services to Maryland residents. As written, the bill includes the licensing activity of the Boards, which currently follow the requirements of the Veterans Auto and Education Improvement Act (VAEIA) of 2022 and Veterans Full Employment Act (VFEA) of 2013. For this reason, the Boards respectfully request an amendment to remove the reference to the Health Occupations Article in section 10-1701 of the State Government Article, subsection (C)(1).

The mission of the Boards is to protect the public by means of regulating licensing and practice compliance for a myriad of health professionals. These means, in part, are standards established and approved by institutions of higher learning, professional practice organizations, and the Maryland Higher Education Commission. The Boards grant practice credentials to those active and retired military service members who complete the requirements of credentialing including

education, supervised clinical experiences, and passing pre-licensing examinations. Such accredited programs are not offered during military service and cannot be gained through *a military training program, a military occupational specialty, or two to five years of active practice*. Often, our esteemed service members have privileges to practice on military facilities without having to meet health professions industry standards and/or in ways that violate scope of practice boundaries.

Additionally, HB 1201 requires that the Boards use the credentialing standards of other jurisdictions as sufficient evidence to grant practice privileges in Maryland. For many of the Boards this is tantamount to reciprocity and therefore a violation of their statutes and regulations because: (1) authority to enter into reciprocal agreements does not currently exist, and/or (2) it exists in limited capacity and therefore cannot accommodate ‘out of network’ military applicants.

Finally, in the interest of efficient administration, many of the Boards do not issue temporary licenses. This practice creates a duplicate work cycle which decreases operational efficiency while increasing operational costs and therefore is an administrative and fiscal burden to the Boards that have limited resources.

If enacted, HB 1201 would cause the Boards to violate existing industry standards, statutes, and regulations in order to credential applicants whose background do not meet health professions industry standards and create a category of work that has a negative fiscal impact. More importantly, it would weaken the Boards’ ability to offer credentials to the most qualified health professions’ applicants and thereby negatively impact fulfillment of our mission to protect the public.

At present VAEIA and VFEA require that the Boards: (1) allow military personnel and their spouses to bypass State licensing requirements, and (2) expedite the credentialing process. Both allow the Boards to honor our military service members and families without compromising credentialing standards.

For these reasons, the Boards respectfully request the following amendment:

Amendment

Page 2, line 11, strike “**THE HEALTH OCCUPATIONS ARTICLE,**”

The State Board of Acupuncture, the State Board of Podiatric Medical Examiners, and the State Board of Social Work Examiners request a favorable report on HB 1201 with the amendment.

For more information, please contact Tiffany L. Smith Williams, Executive Director for the Board of Acupuncture at (410)764-5925 or at tiffany.smith-williams@maryland.gov; or Lillian Reese, Legislative Liaison, at (443) 794-4757 or at lillian.reese@maryland.gov

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