



The Maryland State Dental Association's Opposition to HB 1201 – Occupational and Professional Licensing- Military Training and Military Spouses
Requested by Daniel T. Doherty, Jr. on behalf of the Maryland State Dental Association

- A. **Military Personnel:** The provisions of HB 1201 would mandate that the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners (MSBDE) issue a general license to practice dentistry to a military applicant who has completed a “military program of training in dentistry”, and has performed that specialty at a level that is substantially equivalent to, or exceeds the requirements, of the MSBDE. Further, it only requires that the applicant have been engaged in the practice of dentistry for 2 of the previous 5 years immediately preceding the date of application.

Currently the Maryland Dentistry Act, Title 4 of the Health Occupations Article, sets the standards for a person to obtain a general license to practice dentistry. It currently requires that an applicant:

- (1) to be of good moral character;
- (2) to be at least 18 years old;
- (3) hold a degree of Doctor of Dental Surgery, Doctor of Dental Medicine, or the equivalent, post bachelor's degree from a college or university that is:
 - (a) Authorized by any state or any province of Canada to grant the degree; and
 - (b) Recognized by the Board as requiring adequate preprofessional collegiate training and as maintaining an acceptable course of dental instruction.
- (4) in order to qualify for a general license to practice dentistry, the applicant shall pass an examination given by the Board under this subtitle. Maryland law requires that a dentist holding a valid license in another state who wishes to apply for a Maryland general dental license must have been actively engaged in the practice of dentistry for five (5) consecutive years for at least 850 hours on average per year (vs 2 of the last 5 years required under HB 1201)

In short, HB 1201 would require the MSBDE to issue an applicant a general license to practice dentistry under the following standards which are totally undefined and ambiguous: 1) completion of a military program of training (undefined), and 2) has been awarded a military occupational specialty (without any specified criteria for the award of the specialty). The Maryland State Dental Association believes that to award a dental license to military personnel under these provisions would be contrary to sound licensure standards, and would endanger the dental health of Marylanders.

- B. **Military Spouses:** the requirements of HB 1201 concerning licensure of a military spouse (see Page 3, lines 3 through 19) are inadequate, but more importantly, unnecessary under current Maryland law.
1. Section 1-701 – 706 of the Health Occupations Article provides for the expedited licensure of a service member, a **military spouse**, veteran and a **surviving spouse of a veteran or a service member** who dies within 1 year prior to application for an expedited license (collectively referred to as “Military Applicants”).
 2. Each health occupation Board, including the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners:

a. shall assign to each military applicant an advisor to assist the applicant with the application process;

b. shall expedite the process for licensure;

c. If the military applicant meets the requirements for licensure, the board shall issue the license within 15 days after receiving a completed application.

d. If the board determines that the military applicant does not meet the education, training or experience requirements for licensure, the board shall assist the applicant in identifying programs that offer relevant education or training, or ways of obtaining needed experience.

In Conclusion, HB 1201 provides a dangerous and ambiguous path for military personnel to be granted licensure as dentists in Maryland. It ignores the essential need for the successful completion of a curriculum leading to a Doctor of Dental Surgery or a Doctor of Dental Medicine, and the satisfactory completion of clinical testing to objectively demonstrate sufficient knowledge and skill to provide dental care to patients. Also, the provisions relating to a path for licensure by a military spouse are not only unnecessary under §§ 1-701 – 1-706 of the Health Occupations Article, but HB 1201 does not provide the assistance in applying for a license that the current Health Occupations Article mandates.

For these reasons, the Maryland State Dental Association requests that HB 1201 be given an unfavorable report.

Submitted by:
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