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Susan O'Neill, Chair

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Testimony in Support of
Senate Bill 359 – Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Compact
Senate Finance Committee
February 13, 2024

The Rural Maryland Council supports Senate Bill 359 – Advance Practice Registered Nurse Compact. This bill enters Maryland into the Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Compact. The bill establishes 1) specified procedures and requirements for an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) to practice under a “multistate license” in a “party state” or “remote state”; 2) the composition, powers, and responsibilities of the Interstate Commission of APRN Compact Administrators; and 3) requirements related to the oversight, dispute resolution, and enforcement of the compact. The bill is contingent on similar legislation being enacted in six other states.

Rural Marylanders are often in worse health than their urban and suburban counterparts and lack access to medical facilities and practitioners to improve their health. This is especially true in specialty areas such as mental health and dental care. Additionally, rural areas are made up of aging populations that require more medical attention but lack the healthcare workforce to do so. The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) reports that more than 1.1 million Marylanders are in a primary care Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA). That’s over 1.1 million Marylanders who lack access to the primary health care they need. In the U.S., rural or partially rural areas make up over 68% of the designated primary care HPSAs.

Senate Bill 359 will allow more high-level healthcare workers to practice in Maryland where there are shortages or nurses are needed. While certain areas of the State have been facing a shortage of healthcare workers, it was worsened by the pandemic. As a result of the pandemic, members of the healthcare workforce are leaving at higher rates, mostly from the increased workload and amount of stress that they have been facing. As some healthcare workers quit, it creates more of a workload and stress for the remaining members, resulting in a cycle of burnout. Allowing APRNs from other states to practice in Maryland could reduce this burden and help prevent similar situations in the future. This will allow workers to adequately perform their jobs and ensure that patients are getting the treatment that they need.

The Rural Maryland Council respectfully requests your favorable support of Senate Bill 359.

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) is an independent state agency governed by a nonpartisan, 40-member board that consists of inclusive representation from the federal, state, regional, county, and municipal governments, as well as the for-profit and nonprofit sectors. We bring together federal, state, county, and municipal government officials as well as representatives of the for-profit and nonprofit sectors to identify challenges unique to rural communities and to craft public policy, programmatic, or regulatory solutions.

“A Collective Voice for Rural Maryland”