

# **SB 221\_Licensure Reciprocity\_Support.pdf**

Uploaded by: Allison Taylor

Position: FAV



Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Mid-Atlantic States, Inc  
2101 East Jefferson Street  
Rockville, Maryland 20852

January 30, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle  
Senate Finance Committee  
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: SB 221 -- Support**

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Committee:

Kaiser Permanente is pleased to support SB 221, "Health Occupations Boards – Reciprocal Licensure and Certification." Kaiser Permanente is the largest private integrated health care delivery system in the United States, delivering health care to over 12 million members in eight states and the District of Columbia.<sup>1</sup> Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States, which operates in Maryland, provides and coordinates complete health care services for over 825,000 members. In Maryland, we deliver care to approximately 475,000 members.

As a leading healthcare provider in the region, we recognize the importance of facilitating efficient licensure reciprocity processes for healthcare professionals, and we believe that Senate Bill 221 is a positive step in that direction. This is an important measure that promotes mobility and flexibility for healthcare professionals, ultimately benefiting both the professionals themselves and the communities they serve. By allowing health occupations boards to adopt regulations for reciprocal licensure, Senate Bill 221 recognizes the diverse qualifications and experiences of healthcare professionals across different regions. This not only promotes workforce diversity but also enhances the ability of healthcare providers to meet the evolving needs of our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please feel free to contact me at [Allison.W.Taylor@kp.org](mailto:Allison.W.Taylor@kp.org) or (202) 924-7496 with questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Allison Taylor".

Allison Taylor  
Director of Government Relations  
Kaiser Permanente

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<sup>1</sup> Kaiser Permanente comprises Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc., the nation's largest not-for-profit health plan, and its health plan subsidiaries outside California and Hawaii; the not-for-profit Kaiser Foundation Hospitals, which operates 39 hospitals and over 650 other clinical facilities; and the Permanente Medical Groups, self-governed physician group practices that exclusively contract with Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and its health plan subsidiaries to meet the health needs of Kaiser Permanente's members.

**NPAM Support for reciprocity bill SB221 signed.pdf**

Uploaded by: Claire Bode

Position: FAV



*"Advocating for Nurse Practitioners since 1992"*

January 29, 2024

Bill: SB 221- Health Occupations Boards – Reciprocal Licensure and Certification  
Position: **Support**

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and members of the committee:

On behalf of over 800 members of the Nurse Practitioner Association of Maryland (NPAM), and the over 8,000 certified Nurse Practitioners licensed to practice in Maryland, I am writing in support of SB 221. We recognize the need to address the workforce shortage in Maryland and the need to improve access to care for all Maryland residents. This bill addresses the important issue of reciprocity in health occupations licensing.

By adopting this legislation, we can ensure that qualified healthcare professionals from other states and jurisdictions can bring their skills to Maryland. This allows the healthcare boards and the department of health to make any alterations and updates to the reciprocity regulations as the practice of health care continues to evolve.

We ask that you support this legislation to improve access to healthcare in our state.

Sincerely:

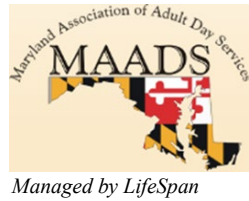
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Malinda D. Duke CRNP-PC'.

Malinda D. Duke CPNP-PC, CDCES  
Executive Director, NPAM  
5372 Iron Pen Place  
Columbia, MD 21044 [NPAMexdir@npedu.com](mailto:NPAMexdir@npedu.com)  
443-367-0277 (office)  
410-404-1747 (mobile)

**SB0221\_FAV\_LifeSpan, MAADS, MNCHA, HPCNM\_Health Oc**

Uploaded by: Danna Kauffman

Position: FAV



TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair  
Members, Senate Finance Committee  
Chair, Senate Finance Committee (Maryland Department of Health)

FROM: Danna L. Kauffman  
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
Christine K. Krone  
410-244-7000

DATE: January 30, 2024

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 221 – *Health Occupations Boards – Reciprocal Licensure and Certification*

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On behalf of the LifeSpan Network, the Maryland Association of Adult Day Services, the Maryland-National Capital Homecare Association, and the Hospice & Palliative Care Network of Maryland, we submit this joint letter of **support** for Senate Bil 221.

Senate Bill 221 is a departmental bill from the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) that authorizes any health occupations board (that does not otherwise have statutory authority to do so) to adopt regulations establishing reciprocity for individuals who are licensed or certified in another State or jurisdiction that also offers similar reciprocity to individuals licensed or certified by the board.

MDH advises that licensure by reciprocity for health care professionals in surrounding states and jurisdictions is needed (1) due to the proximity and corresponding geographical relationship of nearby jurisdictions; (2) to improve access to care and treatment, particularly for rural State residents; and (3) to address current health care workforce challenges. The above-referenced organizations agree with this rationale. Demand for health care workers continues to outpace supply. Senate Bill 221 is a common-sense approach to provide more fluidity to Maryland's workforce and allow health care facilities to attract out-of-state workers, especially in areas that border other states. Therefore, the above organizations respectfully request a favorable report.

# **SB 221- Health Occupations Boards- Reciprocal Lice**

Uploaded by: Jane Krienke

Position: FAV



Maryland  
Hospital Association

January 30, 2024

To: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair, Senate Finance Committee

Re: Letter of Support - Senate Bill 221 - Health Occupations Boards – Reciprocal Licensure and Certification

Dear Chair Beidle:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 62 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 221.

Maryland hospitals continue to experience workforce shortages. The latest data show the positions with the highest vacancy rates in Maryland hospitals are:

- Surgical technicians, 17.8%
- Licensed practical nurses (LPN), 16.8%
- Nurse practitioners, 12.3%
- Registered nurses (RN), 12.1%

Vacancies for RNs vary by region. In Southern Maryland, for example, the vacancy rate is more than double the statewide rate—30.6%.

A 2022 [GlobalData](#) report estimates a statewide shortage of 5,000 full-time registered nurses and 4,000 licensed practical nurses. Without intervention, shortages could double or even triple by 2035. MHA's [2022 State of Maryland's Health Care Workforce report](#) outlines a roadmap to ensure Maryland has the health care workforce it needs now and into the future.

One recommendation is to remove arbitrary barriers to licensure across state borders to facilitate access to telehealth. The Maryland Board of Physicians has led the way by [creating](#) expedited licensure pathways to allow reciprocity for physicians licensed in Virginia and Washington, D.C. This is a creative solution that benefits all jurisdictions. Additionally, the Maryland Health Care Commission in 2023 completed a [study](#) on interstate telehealth expansion, which included recommendations on greater reciprocity for services delivered via telehealth.

SB 221 would allow health occupations boards that do not already have the authority to create reciprocity agreements the ability to do so. The ability to license out of state providers through reciprocity agreements in an expedited fashion could help reduce workforce shortages and increase access to care for all Marylanders.

For these reasons, we request a *favorable* report on SB 221.





Maryland  
Hospital Association

For more information, please contact:

Jane Krienke, Senior Legislative Analyst, Government Affairs  
[Jkrienke@mhaonline.org](mailto:Jkrienke@mhaonline.org)

**5d - SB 221 - FIN- MDH- LOS.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jason Caplan

Position: FAV



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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

January 30, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle  
Chair, Finance Committee  
3 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

### **RE: SB 221 – Health Occupations Boards – Reciprocal Licensure and Certification**

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health respectfully submits this letter of support for Senate Bill (SB) 221 – Health Occupations Boards – Reciprocal Licensure and Certification. SB 221 expands the statutory authority to enter into reciprocity agreements with other states/jurisdictions to all the Health Occupation Boards.

Reciprocal licensure allows for the expansion of the healthcare workforce in Maryland, permitting for a simplified process for established license and certified healthcare workers to apply for licensure in Maryland. This expansion will increase accessibility to care for Marylanders. The Department supports the Boards' interest in expanding the ability of their licensed and certified healthcare providers to practice in Maryland.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at [sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov](mailto:sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov) or (410) 260-3190.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.  
Secretary

# **SB221 License Reciprocity - JH SUPP 1.30.24.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jeanette Ortiz

Position: FAV

Government and Community Affairs

**TO:** The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair  
*Finance Committee*

**FROM:** Jeanette Ortiz, Esq.  
*Deputy Director, Maryland Government Affairs*

**DATE:** January 30, 2024

**RE:** SB221 Health Occupations Boards – Reciprocal Licensure and Certification

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Johns Hopkins supports **SB221 Health Occupations Boards – Reciprocal Licensure and Certification**. This bill authorizes any health occupations board (that does not otherwise have statutory authority to do so) to adopt regulations establishing reciprocity for individuals who are licensed or certified in another State or jurisdiction that also offers similar reciprocity to individuals licensed or certified by the board. Applicants for reciprocity must meet specified standards.

Johns Hopkins Medicine receives more than 2.8 million patients and nearly 337,000 emergency room visits annually. Through Telemedicine we have served 500,000 patients and provided over 2 million telehealth visits, accounting for 13% of ambulatory visits at Johns Hopkins Medicine. With 50 care locations reaching 5 states, our clinicians are eager to reach their patients wherever they are to provide continual care in coordination with local care physicians.

We urge Maryland to pass this bill expanding the authority of any health occupations board to adopt regulations establishing reciprocity for clinicians who are licensed or certified in another State or jurisdiction with similar reciprocity.

As stated in the bill, 20 health occupations boards share responsibility for regulating various health professions in Maryland. Johns Hopkins Telemedicine utilizes most of the health occupations housed under the Maryland Department of Health to provide direct patient care via telemedicine. These health occupations include, but are not limited to:

- Acupuncture Audiologists
- Hearing Aid Dispensers
- Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists
- Chiropractic
- Dental Dietetic Practice
- Environmental Health Specialists,
- Long-Term Care Administrators (formerly Nursing Home Administrators)
- Massage Therapy
- Morticians and Funeral Directors
- Nursing
- Occupational Therapy
- Optometry

## Government and Community Affairs

- Pharmacy
- Physical Therapy Physicians
- Podiatry Professional Counselors and Therapists
- Psychologists
- Residential Child Care Program Professionals
- Social Work

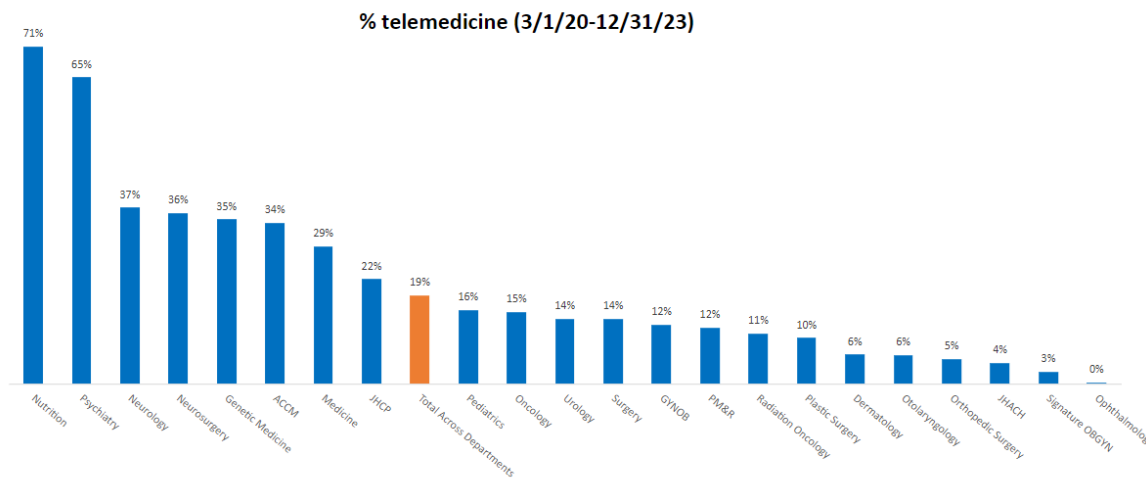
As some of these roles (Physicians, Morticians and Funeral Directors, Pharmacy, and Environmental Health Specialists) already have boards with existing statutory authority to issue a license by reciprocity, granting this authority to all 20 boards would support standardization, allow for joint acceleration of legislative change, and thereby increase telemedicine access to our patients.

Granting this authority to the health occupation boards would also allow for expedited participation in interstate health occupation compacts as they develop. Currently these compacts include PsyPact, Nurse Licensure Compacts, EMS Personnel Interstate Compact, and Counseling Compact, with several more on the horizon, including Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Compact, and Social Work Interstate Licensure Compact.

## Telemedicine Across Specialties



- Care remains distributed across multiple primary care and subspecialty verticals



\* Note: Excludes "telemedicine insensitive" visits, such as lab, radiology.

Accordingly, Johns Hopkins Telemedicine respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on SB221.

# HFAM Testimony SB 221.pdf

Uploaded by: Joseph DeMattos

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE  
SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

January 30, 2024

Senate Bill 221: Health Occupations Boards – Reciprocal Licensure and Certification

*Written Testimony Only*

**POSITION: FAVORABLE**

On behalf of the members of the Health Facilities Association of Maryland (HFAM), we appreciate the opportunity to express our support for Senate Bill 221. HFAM represents skilled nursing centers and assisted living communities in Maryland, as well as associate businesses that offer products and services to healthcare providers. Our members provide services and employ individuals in nearly every jurisdiction of the state.

Senate Bill 221 authorizes certain health occupations boards to adopt regulations establishing reciprocity for individuals licensed or certified in another state or jurisdiction. Applicants for reciprocity must meet specified standards.

While twenty health occupations boards share responsibility for regulating various health professions in Maryland, only four boards currently have authority to issue a license by reciprocity. Because reciprocity agreements are negotiated independently by health occupations boards after the passage of legislation, SB 221 would give health occupations boards control when choosing to enter into a reciprocity agreement.

In Maryland and throughout the country, we are facing a shortage of healthcare workers across settings, with particularly fewer people working in skilled nursing and rehabilitation centers. Workforce recruitment and retention was a challenge before the pandemic and it has only grown more challenging. Tens of thousands of healthcare workers in Maryland have left the field over the last few years. Licensed healthcare professionals are scarce and all healthcare settings are competing for employees from the same labor pool.

This legislation will expand our labor pool by giving healthcare providers the ability to recruit and employ qualified individuals who are already licensed in other states. This will be particularly helpful in improving access to care and treatment in rural and underserved areas.

**For these reasons, we request a favorable report from the Committee on Senate Bill 221.**

*Submitted by:*

Joseph DeMattos, Jr.  
President and CEO  
(410) 290-5132



# **SB221 Health Occupation Boards - Reciprocal Licens**

Uploaded by: Judy Postmus

Position: FAV

January 29, 2024

## Written Testimony in Favor of SB 221 Health Occupations Boards – Reciprocal Licensure & Certification

Thank you, Senator Beidle, Senator Klausmeier and all the members of the Finance Committee for addressing this critical workforce issue for all health professionals licensed by the Maryland Department of Health, including social workers. The University of Maryland, School of Social Work appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in favor of SB 221.

SB 221 applies to all Health Occupations Boards, including the Board of Social Work Examiners, which licenses social workers in Maryland. This bill would permit (not mandate) a Health Occupations Board to adopt regulations to establish reciprocity for individuals who are licensed or certified in another state or jurisdiction that offers similar reciprocity to individuals licensed or certified by the health occupations board. This is an amazing option for states to enter in agreements with other states to recognize licenses of health practitioners in those states. Currently a social worker who wishes to practice in another state would need to apply to each state they wish to practice. In addition, current law requires that the client must be located in Maryland when the services are provided by a social worker licensed in Maryland. These current restrictions have presented challenges for the delivery of services, especially telehealth services and for agencies that have offices in multiple states.

SB 221 provides an easy option for our licensing boards to address specific needs and workforce shortages in our state. If the Board of Social Work Examiners was permitted to implement a process with other states where they would agree to accept each other's licenses it would allow social workers to practice across state lines. If SB 221 passes, then each state that decided to establish reciprocity would determine the licensing criteria they would require.

With the flexibility that SB 221 proposes, Maryland could better address workforce shortages, increase options when responding to a health care crisis, improve coordination and access to care (especially in areas that are underserved, geographically isolated or lack specialty care); improve continuity of care when clients travel or relocate; improve employment opportunities for interstate practice, and enhance interstate teletherapy.

Respectfully submitted by

Judy L. Postmus, Ph.D., ACSW, Dean & Professor



**MDE SB221 SUP.pdf**

Uploaded by: Les Knapp

Position: FAV



**The Maryland Department of the Environment**  
**Secretary Serena McIlwain**

***Senate Bill 221***  
***Health Occupation Boards - Reciprocal Licensure and Certification***

**Position:** Support

**Committee:** Finance

**Date:** January 30, 2024

**From:** Leslie Knapp, Jr.

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The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) **SUPPORTS** SB 221. The bill would help address a shortage of critical licensed or certified health professionals.

**Bill Summary**

The bill authorizes a health occupation board to adopt regulations creating reciprocity for a health professional who is licensed or certified in another state. In order for reciprocity to be granted, the other state must also grant reciprocity to Maryland's licensed or certified health professionals. The licensing or certification standards must be substantially equivalent to Maryland's requirements and the health professional must be in good standing under the laws of the other state.

**Position Rationale**

Not all health occupational boards have the authority to grant reciprocity under current law and there is a shortage of licensed or certified health professionals in many fields, such as environmental health specialists. Senate Bill 221 removes a potential employment barrier by eliminating the need for a health professional to go through the time-consuming process of becoming licensed or certified a second time in Maryland.

For the reasons detailed above, MDE urges a **FAVORABLE** report for SB 221.

# **Nash MMC written testimony\_SB 221 Health Occupatio**

Uploaded by: Lynn Nash

Position: FAV



# MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

*Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy*

January 30, 2024

Honorable Pamela Beidle  
Chair, Senate Finance  
3 East  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

## **SB 221 – Health Occupations Boards – Reciprocal Licensure and Certification – Request for a Favorable Report**

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Finance Committee

On behalf of the Maryland Military Coalition and as its Communications Director, I am writing in support of SB 221. As a licensed healthcare professional, I know all too well about the time and effort it took every time I had a permanent change of station—hundreds of hours of research, collecting the necessary documents AND paying out hundreds of dollars for a new license.

This bill was requested by the Maryland Department of Health. It authorizes enabling legislation for licensure and certification boards to adopt regulations establishing reciprocity for individuals who are licensed or certified in another state. Its intention is not to compete with compact creation or adoption, but instead to bridge the gap for those professions whose numbers are too small to be eligible for a compact. This legislation improves license portability and employment by reducing the burden of holding multiple licenses. Such license reciprocity may enable employment of persons living in nearby states, and would certainly be welcomed by our service member families.

Maryland is home to 34,444 active-duty service members, 14,292 active-duty spouses and 25,642 reservists/national guard members with 28,019 family members<sup>1</sup>. In addition, there are 355,787 veteran households<sup>2</sup>.

Military spouses have long faced employment challenges, with an unwavering unemployment rate of 22%<sup>3</sup> compared to our local rate of 1.8%. Most spouses need to work. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of active-duty spouses had to leave their last job because of a permanent change of station move<sup>4</sup>. On average, they earn 26.8% less in income than their non-military counterparts because of

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<sup>1</sup> [Military One Source](#), as of December 31, 2022

<sup>2</sup> [VA Claim Insider](#), August 10, 2023

<sup>3</sup> 2021 [DoD Survey of Active-Duty Spouses](#)

<sup>4</sup> [U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation – The Hidden Financial Costs of Military Spouse Unemployment](#)

**SB 221 – Health Occupations Boards – Reciprocal Licensure and Certification - Favorable**

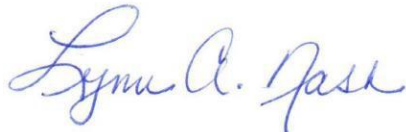
the frequent moves. The average time to find a job for a military spouse is 19 weeks, **OR \$12,374 per year in lost wages** trying to relicense and/or find work in the new state<sup>5</sup>.

The average military family moves every two to three years<sup>6</sup> and for the military spouse it means getting another license before they can work. Here in Maryland, our high cost of living means that for most families, especially for our uniformed service families, having two incomes *is critical*. Time lost seeking a new job and a new occupational license creates economic challenges for our military families, not only in the near term, but the cumulative effect is that they often cannot plan for, save for, and be ready for retirement. Often the difficulty for spouses staying employed is one of the main reasons that service members decide **NOT** to re-enlist.

License reciprocity **improves public access to every occupational category who enacts this legislation**, by reducing overly burdensome and duplicative requirements associated with holding multiple licenses. Reciprocity preserves the regulatory authority of States to protect public health and safety through the current system of State licensure. It lowers expenses and gets the applicant working sooner – a real benefit to our service families.

The Maryland Military Coalition, is a voluntary, non-partisan organization representing 21 veteran service organizations who, in turn, serve over 150,000 Maryland uniformed services men and women and their families. The Coalition ***strongly supports*** SB 221 – **Health Occupations Boards – Reciprocal Licensure and Certification** and asks for your **favorable report**.

Respectfully,



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

Maryland Military Coalition Member Organizations Follow

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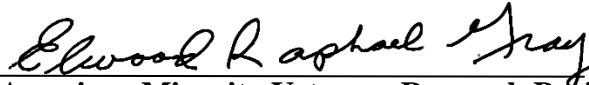
<sup>5</sup> [National Military Family Association Data](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Goldwater Institute, Breaking Down Barriers to Work](#)

Member Organizations, Maryland Military Coalition

  
Air Force Sergeants Association

  
American Military Society

  
American Minority Veterans Research Project

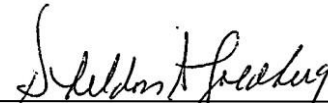
  
Association of the United States Navy


  
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

  
Maryland Veterans Chamber of Commerce

  
Military Officers Association of America

  
Military Order of the Purple Heart

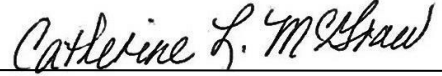
  
Montford Point Marines of America

  
National Association for Black Veterans

  
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association

  
NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers

  
Reserve Organization of America

  
Society of Military Widows

  
National Active and Retired Federal Employees  
Veterans Affairs Directorate, NARFE MD

  
Veterans of Foreign Wars



**5b - SB 221 - FIN - Occupational Therapy- LOS.pdf**

Uploaded by: Maryland State of

Position: FAV



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

Maryland Board of Occupational Therapy Practice  
55 Wade Avenue, Tuerk Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21228  
410-402-8556  
[Health.maryland.gov/botp](https://health.maryland.gov/botp)

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**2024 SESSION  
POSITION PAPER**

**BILL NO: SB 221**  
**COMMITTEE: SENATE FINANCE**  
**POSITION: SUPPORT**

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**TITLE: Health Occupations Boards—Reciprocal Licensure and Certification**

**BILL ANALYSIS:** This bill allows for all health occupations boards to have the opportunity to add reciprocity regulations.

**POSITION AND RATIONALE:** The Maryland Board of Occupational Therapy Practice (the “Board”) supports SB 221.

The Board believes that this bill has the potential to be of great use to both licensees and the public. First, it does not mandate that Boards include reciprocity regulations, but it gives the Board the option to do so in the future.

Secondly, the bill could open doors for licensees. Those licensees who cannot afford the time or the expense to wait for a license in several neighboring states would be able to potentially use reciprocity to treat patients in these states.

Finally, this bill allows for members of the public to have even more choice in selecting a provider. As Maryland closely borders Washington, DC and Virginia, patients could potentially have three times the number of providers from whom to choose, making sure that they receive the best care possible.

The Board supports SB 221 and respectfully asks for a favorable report. If you require additional information, please contact Lauren Murray, Executive Director of the Maryland Board of Occupational Therapy Practice at 410-402-8556 or [lauren.murray@maryland.gov](mailto:lauren.murray@maryland.gov).

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

# **MSDA Support SB 221 - Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Daniel Doherty

Position: FWA



**The Maryland State Dental Association Supports SB 221- Health Occupations Boards –  
Reciprocal Licensure and Certification**  
*Respectfully Submitted by Daniel T. Doherty, Jr. on Behalf of the Maryland State Dental Association*

The Maryland State Dental Association (“MSDA”) strongly supports SB 221. The MSDA advocates for measures that encourage increased mobility by dentists and dental hygienists among the States, PROVIDED that the applicants from other states substantially satisfy the criteria for licensure in Maryland, and are subject to regulation by the Maryland State Board of Examiners (“MSBDE”). This legislation provides for this mobility while assuring the competency of the practitioners being granted reciprocity.

**For these reasons the Maryland State Dental Association requests that SB 221 receive a favorable report.**

**Submitted by:  
Daniel T. Doherty, Jr.  
January 30, 2024**

**SB221\_MoCoDHHS\_Frey\_FWA.pdf**

Uploaded by: Leslie Frey

Position: FWA



# Montgomery County

## Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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**ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550**

**ANNAPOLIS: 240-777-8270**

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**SB 221**

**DATE: January 30, 2024**

**SPONSOR: Chair, Finance Committee (By Request - Departmental - Health)**

**ASSIGNED TO: Finance**

**CONTACT PERSON: Leslie Frey**

**(leslie.frey@montgomerycountymd.gov)**

**POSITION: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENT (Department of Health and Human Services)**

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### **Health Occupations Boards – Reciprocal Licensure and Certification**

Senate Bill 221 authorizes health occupations boards to adopt regulations establishing reciprocity for individuals licensed or certified in another state or jurisdiction. The bill applies to boards that do not otherwise have authority to authorize licenses or certifications by reciprocity.

The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services and the Welcome Back Center of Suburban Maryland<sup>1</sup> strongly support Senate Bill 221 with an amendment to clarify the definition of “jurisdiction” under the bill. We respectfully urge the committee to amend Senate Bill 221 to include the definition of “jurisdiction” to mean a jurisdiction outside of the United States.

In Maryland, it is all too common that immigrants making their home here have attained a high degree of educational and professional achievement but are under-employed and not utilizing their experience in the fields in which they are trained. One barrier to fully participating in the workforce and employing their training for immigrant residents is the lack of reciprocity for their licenses and certifications, which all too often leads to these professionals pursuing careers outside of their training. This is yet another contributor to the shortage of linguistically and culturally competent health professionals in Montgomery County as well as across the State of Maryland. Amending Senate Bill 221 to enable health occupations boards to adopt regulations establishing reciprocity for individuals initially licensed outside of the United States would be a significant step towards alleviating the health occupations licensee shortage in the State and would enable qualified, well-trained professionals who were trained in other countries to practice their profession in Maryland- a benefit to both the health occupations professionals as well as the State as a whole.

We respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report with this amendment on Senate Bill 221.

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<sup>1</sup>The Welcome Back Center of Suburban Maryland, a program of Montgomery County government, assists internationally educated health professionals in navigating the licensure/certification process to join the healthcare workforce in Maryland. Welcome Back Center participants come from diverse ethnic backgrounds and educated in many counties across the globe who are currently living or working in Maryland. The Center has extensive expertise working with internationally educated health professionals in attaining educational and licensure credentialing in Maryland and address the challenges these professionals face that all too often keep them from practicing in their fields of training.

**5c - SB 221 - Counselors Bd - SWA - FIN.pdf**

Uploaded by: State of Maryland (MD)

Position: FWA



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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

### Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists

4201 Patterson Avenue, Suite 316  
Baltimore, Maryland 212151  
Phone: 410-764-4732

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### 2024 SESSION POSITION PAPER

**BILL No.:** SB 221  
**COMMITTEE:** FINANCE  
**POSITION:** SWA

#### **TITLE: Health Occupations Boards - Reciprocal Licensure and Certification**

**BILL ANALYSIS:** This bill gives statutory authority to enter into reciprocity agreements with other states to license/certify individuals under reciprocity providing they meet the requirements for licensure/certification.

**POSITION AND RATIONALE:** The Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists (the “Board”) supports SB 221 with amendment.

In order to enter into a reciprocal agreement with another state/jurisdiction, a health occupations board must first have the statutory authority to do so. Health occupations reciprocity refers to the process of obtaining a license to practice in a new state without going through the initial license application process and thereby reducing barriers to interstate mobility for licensed professionals.

This Board initiated the concept of reciprocity for its licensees to increase the portability of the licenses of professional counselors, marriage and family therapists, alcohol and drug counselors, and art therapists. It addresses the workforce crisis in Maryland by increasing access to licensed/certified individuals, thus giving Maryland residents greater choice of treatment providers and treatment modalities. Additionally, it will enhance accessibility and continuity of service by including the use of teletherapy. SB 221 will also provide these same benefits for other health occupations seeking a reciprocity option.

A reciprocal agreement will not take the place of an interstate compact, which several health occupations boards have. In fact, it is more complementary than a replacement. Compacts allow portability exclusively between compact states, while reciprocity can be agreed to on a potentially larger scale.



The Board requests the following amendments:

**Amendment 1**

Page 1, line 21, following "...ANOTHER STATE" strike "OR"; line 22, strike "JURISDICTION"

**Amendment 2**

Page 2, line 3, following "...ANOTHER STATE" strike "OR"; line 4, strike "JURISDICTION"

**Amendment 3**

Page 2, line 8, strike "OR JURISDICTION"

Thank you for considering this testimony. The Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists is requesting a favorable report on SB 221. If you require and additional information, please contact the Board's Legislation/Regulations Committee Chair, Karen Katrinic at [karen.katrinic@maryland.gov](mailto:karen.katrinic@maryland.gov) or call 410-533-1991; or contact the Board's Legislative Liaison, Lillian Reese at [lillian.reese@maryland.gov](mailto:lillian.reese@maryland.gov) or call 443-794-4757.

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