

## SUPPORT

### SB 359 Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Compact

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My name is Lorraine Diana, Certified Family Nurse Practitioner, practicing in Maryland for 43 years and Legislative Co Chair for the Maryland Academy of Advanced Practice Clinicians since we were founded in 2005.

Our nation faces pressing health care challenges—an aging and more diverse population, more people with more chronic conditions, millions more uninsured, rising costs, and a shortage of providers. We can help address some of these challenges by maximizing the use of advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) to tackle health care challenges in access, quality, and cost.

The APRN Compact would streamline access and provide additional choices to patients and families by cutting red tape so APRNs can more easily deliver care across state lines. The APRN Compact also promotes safety and quality. It codifies uniform standards, ensures that states have the authority to enforce public protection at the state level, and makes it easier to exchange information among member states when issues arise.

The APRN Compact will enhance and improve health care access in rural and inner-city communities across Maryland, supporting patients and the family caregivers that help keep their loved ones safe and independent in the community. The APRN Compact is also a commonsense way to facilitate greater telehealth options making it easier for patients to receive care when and where they need it.

Health care provider shortages hit older residents hard. Older adults sometimes lack the ability or resources to get to their appointments because of mobility issues, long travel distances to a provider, and wait times for appointments. This risks their health and adds unnecessary stress to family caregivers. Once implemented, the APRN Compact would encourage APRNs to provide care both in-person or through telehealth technologies in multiple states, connecting patients and their family caregivers with qualified primary care. APRNs are a highly valued and integral part of the health care system and a crucial source of support for family caregivers. They are registered nurses with a master's or doctoral level education trained to provide advanced health care services, including primary and preventative care.

We understand there are concerns regarding support of this bill because NPAM and the pediatric nurse practitioners do not support the bill. They are not representative of the entire community of APRNs in Maryland. MNA's legislative committee voted overwhelmingly to support this bill 2 weeks ago, as they did last year. The vote was 16-3 in favor of supporting the bill and making it a priority nursing bill for 2024. MACNS, MANA, and ACNM Maryland also have joined the coalition to support. This bill is about addressing workforce shortages and providing increased access to care for patients.

As a leader for APRNs in Maryland, the Maryland Academy of Advanced Practice Clinicians (MAAPC) has a mission to provide direction and leadership for the advancement of nursing practice and excellent patient care in organized healthcare systems. MAAPC represents over 3000 APRNs comprised of nurse practitioners, certified nurse midwives, certified registered nurse anesthetists, and clinical nurse specialists from every county in Maryland including the critically underserved rural areas. Support for SB 359 not only advances the ability of APRNs to provide care in a regulated manner across state lines but would also extend nursing's ability to provide patient care in underserved areas. As Maryland was an early adopter of the Nurse Licensure Compact for Registered Nurses, it is now imperative that Maryland is on the forefront of the APRN Licensure Compact, which was adopted by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) on August 12, 2020. Maryland could be and should be one of the first 7 states to pass legislation which enacts this national compact.

Surveys conducted by the Maryland Board of Nursing in 2021 and 2022, and MAAPC in 2022 show the majority of APRNs surveyed support this legislation and want the choice to have a multistate license.

Moreover, the APRN Compact can help residents quickly access lifesaving services during natural disasters, weather emergencies, or a public health crisis. As the COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated, there is a need for state-based APRN license portability during a health care crisis to help states secure surge capacity and save lives when local needs exceed local health care supply. Our participation in the APRN Compact would complement Maryland's participation in the enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact (eNLC or "RN Compact") and allow patients to benefit fully from the array of services APRNs could provide across state lines. Much like the RN Compact, the APRN Compact would also help military families during the relocation process, if the military spouse is an APRN.

Opponents of this APRN Compact have no real solutions to the work force shortages Maryland is facing. The Compact will help move Maryland in a positive direction as we move into the future of healthcare.

We believe this policy change will improve patient access to care, facilitate expanded opportunities for telehealth, improve health outcomes, and reduce costs.

I ask for a favorable report on SB 359.

Remember, this is a voluntary license! APRNs who don't want this multistate license do not have to obtain one. Please allow the APRNs who DO want a multistate license the opportunity to obtain one.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

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