



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550

ANNAPOLIS: 240-777-8270

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)

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 Maryland¹ 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.

¹The 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.