



2024 SESSION
POSITION PAPER

BILL NO: SB 359
COMMITTEE: Health and Government Operations
POSITION: Support
TITLE: Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Compact

BILL ANALYSIS

SB 359 - Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Compact if passed enters Maryland into the Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Compact (or compact). The legislation establishes specified procedures and requirements for an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) to practice under a multistate license in a party state or remote state; the composition, powers, and responsibilities of the Interstate Commission of APRN Compact Administrators; and requirements related to oversight, dispute resolution, and enforcement of the compact. The bill is contingent on substantially similar legislation being enacted in three other states.¹

POSITION AND RATIONALE

The Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) supports SB 359. The bill would allow APRNs to obtain one multistate license to practice in other participating compact states. The compact will enable greater access to care for a wide range of services delivered in-person or through telehealth modalities across various health care settings. APRNs include nurse practitioners, certified nurse-midwives, clinical nurse specialists, and nurse anesthetists. The legislation will benefit APRNs, patients, and health care providers through a unified licensing process that allows APRNs to utilize their specialized skills to respond to health care demands with the aim of addressing critical gaps in health care disparities for underserved and vulnerable populations.^{2, 3} Use of

¹ The APRN Compact will come into effect once seven states have enacted the APRN legislation. Four states have adopted legislation (Delaware, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah) and two states have pending legislation (Maryland and Arizona). More information available at: www.aprncompact.com/about.page.

² National Library of Medicine, *Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Role*, March 2023. Annie P. Boehning; Lorelei D. Punsalan. Available at:

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK589698/#:~:text=APRNs%20are%20registered%20nurses%20with%20advanced%20education%20and%20specialized%20training,systems%2C%20society%2C%20and%20humanity.

³ Journal of Advanced Practices in Nursing, *The Impact of Telehealth in Advanced Nursing Practice: Expanding Access to Care*, Volume 8:4, 2023. Available at: www.hilarispublisher.com/open-access/the-impact-of-telehealth-in-advanced-nursing-practice-expanding-access-to-care.pdf.

telehealth technology expands APRNs reach via virtual consultations to timely deliver preventive care and manage chronic conditions.⁴

The legislation aligns with the findings and recommendations from MHCC’s September 2023, *Interstate Telehealth Expansion Study* report (report).⁵ The MHCC conducted a study in collaboration with stakeholders at the request of the Health and Government Operations (HGO) Committee. In a letter dated May 24, 2022, the HGO Chair noted support for the expanded use of telehealth since the COVID-19 PHE, and tasked MHCC with convening a workgroup to inform development of recommendations to expand interstate telehealth. The MHCC convened workgroup (January – March 2023) discussed barriers and opportunities to expanding the delivery of telehealth services across state lines. The workgroup consisted of representatives from health occupation boards, providers, payers, health care consumers, professional associations, professional liability insurance carriers, and various State agencies.

The MHCC’s report includes nine recommendations for advancing interstate telehealth practice, which includes adopting legislation to advance participation in compacts. The workgroup viewed compacts as important to help alleviate workforce supply challenges that result in longer wait times and impede access to care. Workgroup participants generally favor compacts with a mutual recognition model⁶ where providers maintain a license in their home state and apply for a multistate license or privilege (authorization) to practice in other compact states.⁷

The MHCC believes this legislation is an important next step to improve access to care and health equity for underserved and vulnerable populations. If passed by the General Assembly, the law will expand cooperation among states licensure boards, enable greater use of telehealth and enhance public safety.

For the stated reasons above, we ask for a favorable report on SB 359.

⁴ Journal of Clinical Nursing, *Nurse practitioner led telehealth services: A scoping review*, October 2023. Julia Charalambous RN, BN, BMassComn, Olivia Hollingdrake RN, BN, MPH, PhD, Jane Currie NP, BSc (Hons), MSc, PhD. Available at: www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/jocn.16898.

⁵ Maryland Health Care Commission, *Interstate Telehealth Expansion Study*, September 2023. Available at: mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/home/workgroups/documents/ist/IST_HGO_rpt.pdf.

⁶ Under a mutual recognition model, a licensee receives a multistate license from the compact state in which the licensee has established residence or purchases a privilege from the compact.

⁷ JDSupra, *Developments in Interstate Telehealth Licensing*, December 2022. Available at: www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/developments-in-interstate-telehealth-3935324/.

