

Bill No. HB 425 **Committee:** Health and Government Operations

Title: Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Compact

Hearing Date: February 6, 2024 **Position:** Support

Witness: Shirley Devaris, RN, BSAD, MA, JD

(shirleydevaris@yahoo.com)

Good afternoon, Madame Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee. Thank you, Delegate Rosenberg, for sponsoring this bill.

My name is Shirley Devaris, and I am offering testimony in support of this bill based on my 19 years of experience with regulating nursing practice in Maryland, first as staff to the former House Environmental Matters Committee, and then as Director of Legislative Affairs for the Board of Nursing before retiring in 2019. I am asking for a favorable vote on this bill.

Maryland was the first state to adopt and implement the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) for Registered Nurses and Licensed Practical Nurses in 1999. That original compact became a role model for health occupation compacts all over the country. In 2015 a new revised compact was introduced and quickly became the law of the nursing world in 41 states. Legislation is pending in 7 other states to join the NLC.

States have found health occupation compacts make it easier to attract out of state nurses to practice in their workforce. The compacts have offered a seamless entry for nurses to practice within member states. With our acute nursing shortage APRNs should not have to wait months to be certified in another state.

This APRN Compact has the same safeguards as in the revised NLC and basically functions in the same way as the NLC. The difference in this revised version of the APRN compact is a requirement that an APRN have 2,060 practice hours before obtaining a compact license. The previous

version of the APRN compact that did not get adopted by the required number of states because many states still have barriers to full practice for APRNs in their statutes. In fact, 30 plus states have some kind of barrier to practice. This practice hour requirement is a compromise to make it easier for other states to join the compact.

It is this practice hour requirement that has understandably been the source of opposition to the compact. In Maryland we fought hard for the independent practice of our APRNs. We know they are qualified to begin practice after they graduate and pass the national certification exam. Not all states do. This bill realistically deals with this issue. We cannot wait for other states to take the same progressive attitude toward Advanced Practice that Maryland has.

The practice hour requirement is not a barrier to practice in compact or other states. An APRN still has the option of applying for certification by endorsement to another state within the first year of practice.

Ideally, we would like an APRN Compact without the practice hour requirement but more importantly we need, right now, the ease of portability that the compact provides to allow other compact state nurses to practice in Maryland and allow our APRNs to provide health care across state lines.

Thank you.