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SB0221

March 21, 2024

TO: Members of the House Health & Government Operations Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

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

POSITION: FAVORABLE

Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 221.

SB 221 authorizes certain health occupations boards to adopt regulations establishing reciprocity for individuals licensed or certified in another state or jurisdiction. Adopting such license reciprocity would decrease barriers to practicing health care in Maryland, increase the number of providers in the state, and expand access to healthcare for Maryland residents.ⁱ

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many states implemented reciprocal license policies, allowing doctors and other health care providers to practice across state lines. This resulted in expanded access to care during the public health emergency.ⁱⁱ We must continue to do what we can to expand access to care, as Maryland continues to face an ongoing shortage of health care workers; as of 2022, one in four hospital nursing positions was vacant.ⁱⁱⁱ Allowing certain health occupations boards to establish reciprocal licenses could potentially ease healthcare workforce shortages, making it easier for Marylanders to get the care they need.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable** report on SB 221.

ⁱ Deyo, R. A., Ghosh, A., & Plemmons, G. S. (2023). Access to Care and Physician Practice Growth. Integrated Medical Learning and Communication Collaborative. <https://www.imlcc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Access-to-Care-and-Physician-Practice-Growth-Dr-Deyo-Ghosh-and-Plemmons-11-2023.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Chaudry, H. (2022). Expanding Licensure Portability And Access To Care: Lessons Learned During COVID-19. *Health Affairs*, 41(1), 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2022.00756>

ⁱⁱⁱ Maryland Hospital Association. (2022). The State of Maryland's Health Care Workforce Report. Retrieved from <https://www.mhaonline.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/2022-state-of-maryland-s-health-care-workforce-report.pdf>