



Committee: Senate Finance Committee
Bill Number: SB 72 - Health Occupations Boards - English Proficiency Requirements and Licensure by Endorsement for Nursing
Hearing Date: January 28, 2025
Position: Favorable

The Maryland Nurses Association support *Senate Bill 72 - Health Occupations Boards – English Proficiency Requirements and Licensure*. SB 72 aims to streamline the English proficiency requirements for health occupations boards in Maryland.¹

SB 72 makes the following modification to the Nurse Practice Act:

- 1) Prohibits health occupational boards from demanding additional evidence of English proficiency if an applicant already holds a valid, unrestricted license from another state with similar requirements; passed an English proficiency exam approved by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; **or** the applicant holds a valid, unencumbered multistate license under the nurse licensure compact;
- 2) Requires that each health occupations board maintain a list of states with acceptable English proficiency standards on their websites; and;
- 3) Modifies licensure by endorsement (licensure without examination) in the following manner. If an applicant holds a valid multistate license under the Nurse Licensure Compact, an applicant will not be required to provide evidence that 1) at the time of graduation from a nursing education program in another state or country, the

¹ Maryland currently requires the following scores from the English Proficiency Exams:

- TOEFL iBT: Listening — 21; Reading — 19; Speaking — 26; Writing — 19; Overall score of at least 84
- IELTS: Listening – 6; Speaking — 6; Reading – 6; Overall score of at least 6.5
- MET: Listening — 53; Reading — 53; Speaking — 53; Writing — 53;
- PTE: Listening — 50; Reading — 50; Speaking — 50; Writing — Overall score of at least 55
- OET: Listening — 300; Reading — 300; Speaking — 300; Writing — 300

applicant met the educational qualifications required by Maryland law, and 2) at the time of licensure or registration in the other state or country, the applicant passed an examination similar to the one given in Maryland

As stated previously, SB 72 would allow for English proficiency examinations accepted by other states or the federal government to provide evidence of English proficiency in Maryland. Upon review of the requirements required by other states and the federal government, MNA believes that the waiver of an additional exam is appropriate and in the best interest of Marylanders by expediated the licensure process without lowering the appropriate standards set by Maryland Board of Nursing (“MBON”).

Furthermore, the modification of the requirements for licensure by endorsement also provides for more efficient licensure without jeopardizing the appropriate standards set by the MBON. If the applicant has proven the educational requirements and passed the appropriate examination thereby obtaining a state license and a multistate license from a foreign jurisdiction, the applicant should not be required to provide the proof again to Maryland.

SB 72 will streamline the licensure process in Maryland. These changes will help ensure that qualified nurses can continue to provide essential care to our communities without unnecessary delays. SB 72 is a vital piece of legislation that will help address the growing demand for healthcare professionals in Maryland. By removing redundant requirements and promoting a more efficient licensure process, we can better serve our communities and improve access to quality healthcare.

If you have any questions, please contact the MNA lobbyist, William Kress, Esquire at bill@kresshammen.com.