



Board of Nursing

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

January 28th, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Finance Committee
Room 3
Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB0072 – Health Occupations Boards - English Proficiency Requirements and Licensure by Endorsement for Nursing

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee Members:

The Maryland Board of Nursing (the Board) respectfully submits this letter of support for SB0072 Health Occupations Boards - English Proficiency Requirements and Licensure by Endorsement for Nursing.

As part of the State's effort to improve healthcare access and the workforce shortage, the Board has been diligently working to increase the number of qualified nurses in the State while maintaining our high standards of practice that keep Maryland patients safe and healthy. The Board has supported a number of initiatives that would expedite the licensure process for foreign educated nurses looking to work in the State, such as collaborating with the Welcome Back Center of Suburban Maryland and the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) to add additional English language proficiency (ELP) exam options. As a result of these partnerships, three additional ELP exams were adopted by the Board in 2024, those exams being the Michigan English Test (MET), Pearson Test of English (PTE), and Occupational English Test (OET). SB0072 continues this expansion by establishing additional ELP exam options that applicants may use to meet minimum qualifications for licensure. In addition, the bill provides that holding a valid, unencumbered multistate license under the Nurse Licensure Compact shall constitute sufficient proof of proficiency in the communication of the English language.

Additionally, this session, the Board, in collaboration with MDH, has introduced a Departmental, which adds an alternative path to licensure for endorsement applicants, specifically by permitting certain applicants to show evidence of additional educational credentials, beyond the individual's basic nursing education credential, in order to meet the minimum educational requirements for licensure by endorsement. SB0072 further expands the available pathways to licensure by endorsement by permitting individuals that hold a valid, unencumbered multistate license under the Nurse Licensure Compact to obtain licensure by endorsement in Maryland without the need to reproduce evidence of the applicant's nursing education.

Both bills allow more nurses to begin work in the State without delay, improving healthcare accessibility in underserved areas, particularly those bordering other states like Western Maryland and the Eastern Shore. By streamlining the process, the bill encourages a more diverse healthcare workforce and increases service availability in communities with critical needs.

Thank you again for your time. Again, we would like to encourage the committee to give a favorable report for SB0072. For more information, please contact Ms. Mitzi Fishman, Director of Legislative Affairs, at 410-585-2049 or mitzi.fishman@maryland.gov, or Ms. Rhonda Scott, Executive Director, at 410-585-1953 or rhonda.scott2@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christine Lechliter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christine Lechliter
Board President

The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.