



“Advocating for Nurse Practitioners since 1992”

February 21, 2025

Bill: HB 602- State Board of Nursing - Advanced Practice Nursing Licensure and Specialty Certification - Reciprocity Discussions (Maryland Border States Advanced Practice Nursing Act)

Position: **Support**

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and members of the committee:

On behalf of the over 850 members of the Nurse Practitioner Association of Maryland (NPAM), I am writing in support of HB 602.

In 2024, the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) introduced and legislation was passed authorizing health occupations boards that did not otherwise have statutory authority to do so, to adopt regulations establishing reciprocity for individuals who are licensed or certified in another State that also offers similar reciprocity. (SB 221/HB 146). Our association, along with most of the legislature supported that bill which was due to be effective 7/1/2024. To date, there are no regulations in process.

The Nurse Practitioner Association requests support for Senate Bill 407, which directs the Maryland State Board of Nursing (MBON) to pursue advanced practice reciprocity agreements with our Border States: including Delaware, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia. This bill requires the MBON to report back annually on the status of these negotiations, including whether agreements have been entered into and those terms. If no negotiations have been made, reasons and barriers to entering into these agreements along with suggestions for any regulatory or legislative changes necessary to facilitate such reciprocity should be reported.

Maryland faces ongoing challenges in maintaining an adequate healthcare workforce, particularly in underserved and rural areas. By facilitating licensure

reciprocity with neighboring states, this bill will make it easier for qualified healthcare providers to practice in Maryland.

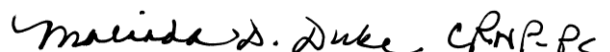
The Board of Nursing can and should pursue these conversations immediately. In fact, the Board of Physicians has implemented reciprocal agreements with Virginia and DC and said that the "option has proved very popular, and in the first four months alone, the Board issued more than 80 licenses by reciprocity."

The success of these agreements is why last year the Maryland Dept. of Health introduced the Reciprocity Bill. These agreements are negotiated *independently* by health occupations boards. They give each health occupations board more control when choosing to enter a reciprocity agreement. MDH advises that licensure by reciprocity for health care professionals in surrounding states is needed (1) due to the proximity and corresponding geographical relationship of nearby states; (2) to improve access to care and treatment, particularly for rural State residents; and (3) to address current health care workforce challenges.

NPAM, as nurse practitioner leaders in Maryland are participating in a Mid-Atlantic NP Leaders group to have similar conversations that we are asking the Maryland Board of Nurses to have. The goal is to discuss work-force fluidity across state lines to ensure optimal patient care and healthcare access. We believe this bill represents a practical, common-sense, and speedy solution to *enact regulations* around the already passed Reciprocity Bill of 2024 to improve healthcare access for all Marylanders. We request a favorable report for HB 602.

If there are further questions or concerns, please reach out to me, the Executive Director of NPAM. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely:



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