



February 21st, 2025

Maryland House of Delegates
HGO Committee
241 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Honorable Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the pediatric nurse practitioners (PNPs) and fellow pediatric-focused advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) of the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP) Chesapeake Chapter, we are writing to express our **support of HB 602 State Board of Nursing - Advanced Practice Nursing Licensure and Specialty Certification - Reciprocity Discussions (Maryland Border States Advanced Practice Nursing Act)**.

APRNs are instrumental in expanding access to care, however, much like most other healthcare roles across the nation, there is a shortage of healthcare providers in Maryland. We have seen how devastating this can be in times of crisis, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic and RSV outbreak. This bill is critical for expanding healthcare access, and reducing barriers and unnecessary bureaucratic tape will be key to addressing gaps in acute care, primary care, mental health, and rural health care. Underserved areas often struggle with provider shortages, therefore increasing the number of available providers would help ensure timely care.

Many APRNs live in nearby bordering states and would then consider working in our area without having to move or ensure unnecessary hoops. We would have a more adaptable workforce, able to cross state lines readily in case of a public health emergency or natural disaster. Reciprocity also aids in expansion of telehealth services, allowing APRNs to provide virtual care to patients across multiple states without leaving their office. This is particularly important to help address the growing youth mental health crisis, as there is a significant lack of certified pediatric mental health providers. With this bill and the creation of a reciprocal license, we would be able to have an exponential gain of available psychiatric APRNs via telehealth to serve our children.

Acute care PNPs are integral members of our hospital systems, filling gaps created by changes in graduate medical education required hours for physicians in training. In the children's hospitals throughout the state, acute care PNPs can be found in intensive care units, cancer wards, operating rooms, specialty clinics, and many other sites. However, less than 5% of all NPs have this certification. When these jobs are left vacant, patient care can be significantly impacted. With reciprocity, acute care PNPs from neighboring states would be able to fill these temporary staffing gaps, thus improving patient care and overall hospital operations.

Reciprocity offers a financial gain to the state of Maryland. The Board of Nursing would be able to charge a higher rate for said license, and money for Marylanders to practice in other states will instead go to our BON. This will also ensure that Maryland remains competitive in attracting and retaining skilled APRNs to meet the needs of all of our patients. Employers of companies with practice

locations in multiple states would likely encourage this higher-priced license to have increased flexibility of their workforce.

For these reasons the Maryland Chesapeake Chapter of NAPNAP extends their support to support of **HB 602 State Board of Nursing - Advanced Practice Nursing Licensure and Specialty Certification - Reciprocity Discussions (Maryland Border States Advanced Practice Nursing Act)** and requests a favorable report.

The pediatric advanced practice nurses of your state are grateful to you for your attention to these crucial issues. The Chesapeake Chapter of the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners membership includes over 200 primary and acute care pediatric nurse practitioners who are committed to improving the health and advocating for Maryland's pediatric patients. If we can be of any further assistance, or if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Chesapeake Chapter legislative committee or president, Yvette Laboy at mdchesnapnapleg@outlook.com.

Sincerely,

Yvette Laboy

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