



TESTIMONY FOR HB1199 Physicians - Licensing Internationally Trained Physicians

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Hill

Committee: Health and Government Operations

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB1199 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

It's truly disheartening to have to travel all the way to Virginia for arthritis care. I can't help but think about how many of my neighbors endure long distances and wait times for basic healthcare. The U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) highlights numerous Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) across Maryland, underscoring a critical need for more healthcare providers. I live in Montgomery County, which isn't an HPSA, leading me to believe the struggle is greater for others in my state.

Pandemics and an aging population are likely to exacerbate this shortage, highlighting the urgent need for more physicians to meet the growing demand for healthcare services. This situation negatively impacts the overall quality of healthcare and patient outcomes, particularly for vulnerable populations who may already face barriers to accessing care.

HB1199 addresses this problem by allowing internationally trained physicians to obtain licenses, thereby increasing the number of qualified medical professionals available to serve the state's residents. The bill authorizes the State Board of Physicians, beginning October 1, 2027, to issue licenses to internationally trained physicians who have passed required exams and meet demanding professional requirements.

The benefits to Marylanders include improved access to healthcare services, particularly in underserved areas. By increasing the number of licensed physicians, the bill aims to reduce wait times for medical appointments and enhance the overall quality of healthcare in the state. It also improves the availability of good healthcare for our vulnerable populations.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition supports this bill and recommends a FAVORABLE report in committee.