



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

February 25, 2025

The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk
The Honorable Bonnie Cullison
House Health and Government Operations Committee
240 Taylor House Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: Request for **FAVORABLE Report – HB 602 – Maryland Border States Advanced Practice Nursing Act**

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison and Distinguished Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee:

On behalf of the Maryland Military Coalition and as an Advance Practice Registered Nurse, I write to recommend a **Favorable report** on this bill. For two years, the State of Maryland has attempted to improve the portability of Advance Practice licensure through enactment of the Advance Practice Compact. Both times the legislation failed. HB 602, the **Maryland Border States Advanced Practice Nursing Act**, requires that the State Board of Nursing hold discussion with licensing boards of with four adjacent states (DE, PA, VA and WV) as well as the District of Columbia to pursue reciprocity agreements for advance practice nursing licensure and specialty certification. The bill's intent is to (1) increase access to qualified advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs); (2) enhance license portability; and (3) provide ease of telehealth access in the State and surrounding jurisdictions.

Maryland is experiencing its worst shortage in healthcare providers ever. In the [Commission to study the Health Care Workforce Crisis Final Report 2022/2023](#), the Workforce Data Advisory Group found the following:

1. Maryland is not growing its health care workforce at the same rate as other states;
2. Health care workforce shortages are most pronounced in rural parts of the state;
3. Wage visibility is strong, but wage stagnation and other gaps exist; and
4. Uncredentialed and other home health care workforces play a significant role in the healthcare system but data about them is limited.

[2022 State of Maryland's Health Care Workforce Report](#), released by the Maryland Hospital Association (MHA), found that there is a **workforce crisis in Maryland's healthcare sector**. The report detailed that one in four hospital nursing positions are vacant, and also cited high staff turnover and an insufficient nursing pipeline.

Similarly, the [Maryland Hospital Association](#) found that overall, **Maryland is 16 percent below** the national average for number of physicians available for clinical practice. **The most severe**

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problems occur in rural parts of the state and will get much worse by 2025, based on the study's results. The biggest statewide gaps occur in **Primary Care, Emergency Medicine, Anesthesiology**, Hematology/Oncology, Thoracic Surgery and Vascular Surgery, Psychiatry, and Dermatology.

The situation in **Southern Maryland, Western Maryland, and the Eastern Shore** is the most troubling. All three regions fall significantly below national levels in active practicing physicians. **Southern Maryland** already has critical shortages in **25 of the 30 physician categories** (83.3%), **Western Maryland 20 of 30** (66.7%), and the **Eastern Shore 18 of 30** (60.0%).

As of December 31, 2024, the [Bureau of Health Workforce](#) has designated **56 separate Health Professional Shortage Areas** in **Maryland**—7 are geographic, 31 are population groups and 18 are facilities who serve **1.2 million Marylanders** who are getting **ONLY 29% of their healthcare needs met.**

To **eliminate** the primary care HPSA designations, **Maryland needs an additional 354 primary care practitioners** to provide services in these shortage areas. These service gaps could be fulfilled by APRNs.

Maryland has several large healthcare providers, who provide services across state lines. Since the pandemic, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid have increasingly allowed telehealth, however, the provider must be licensed in the state where the patient is receiving services.

Reciprocity:

- The process of issuing a license, registration, or certification to an applicant who is licensed, registered, or certified and in good standing under the laws of another state with requirements that, in the opinion of the Board, were substantially equivalent at the time of licensure, registration, or certification to the requirements of the gaining jurisdiction. **Both jurisdictions agree to allow licensees to be admitted in a like manner.**
- **License reciprocity is a standard of practice agreement between states** in which a jurisdiction (i.e., Maryland) allows an active licensee from another jurisdiction (usually an adjacent state), to practice in its jurisdiction, subject to special license law requirements. This recognition between two jurisdictions is allowed when education standards and scopes of practice are deemed similar, and the applicant is qualified without additional requirements. **Reciprocity is encouraged when mutually advantageous** (e.g. a business operates in two or more jurisdictions).

This bill has the potential to resolve shortages in crisis areas. It has no fiscal consequence. Per the fiscal note, “the bill’s requirements can likely be handled with existing budgeted resources”.

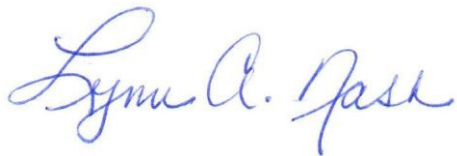
The Maryland Military Coalition supports the intent of HB 602 and ask for a **FAVORABLE report.**

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The Maryland Military Coalition is a registered non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization comprised of 22 prominent Maryland-based veteran and military groups, representing over 150,000 service-connected individuals, including those currently serving, veterans, retirees and their families, caregivers, and survivors.

We want to thank Delegates Hutchinson and Adams for their on-going support of **ALL** of the uniformed services community in Maryland.

Respectfully,

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

Lynn A. Nash, PhD, RN, PHCNS-BC, FAAN
CAPT (R), U.S. Public Health Service
Communications Director

1 Attachment – Member Organizations of the Maryland Military Coalition



Member Organizations of the Maryland Military Coalition

Air Force Sergeants Association

American Military Society

American Minority Veterans Research Project

Association of the United States Navy

Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service

Disabled American Veterans

Fleet Reserve Association of Annapolis

Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A

Maryland Air National Guard Retirees' Association

Maryland Veterans Chamber of Commerce

Military Officers Association of America

Military Order of the Purple Heart

Military Order of the World Wars

Montford Point Marines of America

National Association of Black Veterans

National Association of Retired Federal Employees, Maryland Veterans

Naval Enlisted Reserve Association

NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers

Platoon 22

Reserve Organization of America

Society of Military Widows

Veterans of Foreign Wars