



Board of Nursing

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D., Secretary

March 11, 2026

The Honorable Heather Bagnall
Chair, Health Committee
240 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB 1372 – Public Health - Office of Health Care Quality Information and Maryland Department of Health Centralization Commission

Dear Chair Bagnall and Committee Members:

The Maryland Board of Nursing (the Board) respectfully submits this letter of concern for HB 1372 Public Health - Office of Health Care Quality Information and Maryland Department of Health Centralization Commission. This bill would create a Health Centralization Commission within the Department of Health with the goal of unifying the administrative and licensing work of the health occupations boards. The Board takes very seriously the goals of efficiency and accountability to its constituents; however, given the disparate functions of the various Boards, and informed by the recent successes of the Board of Nursing to achieve those goals, the Board does not believe a consolidated system is the best way forward. Maryland's health occupations boards are intentionally structured as semi-independent, peer-regulated bodies. This model protects the public by ensuring that professional standards are developed and enforced by subject matter experts while remaining accountable to both the Secretary and the General Assembly. As such, the Board would like to present three items of concern for the Committee's consideration.

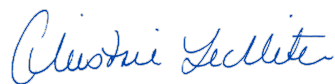
1. The premise of the bill seems to be the Office of Legislative Audits (OLA) report that assessed the Boards from September 25, 2019, through July 31, 2023. During these assessments the Department of Health saw extraordinary disruptions and setbacks including a cyber-attack, high employee vacancy rates, and a backlog of unaddressed complaints that resulted from these unique and structural issues. Since the publishing of the report, the Board has worked diligently to address these issues, and it has cleared more than 2000 complaints from the backlog mentioned in the report, with 1296 outstanding in the Board's annual report of July 2025, down from the 3307 noted just two years before. Allowing an outside body to interrupt this progress and force possibly contradictory policies on the Board would only serve to undo much of the work the Board's employees and administrators have accomplished.
2. Depleting the Board's special funds to support a department-wide licensure system is a misuse of licensee fees for a system the Board does not require. The Board's special fund is acquired through licensure fees and those fees are statutorily required to cover only the cost of effective regulation of nurses and the other allied professions under the Board's specific jurisdiction (Health Occupations, 8-206(b)(2), Annotated Code of Maryland). If the funds are mandated to be

allocated to this additional expense, there is concern that it will result in increased licensure fees on a constituency that would receive no increase or improvement in service.

3. The Board currently has a strong relationship not only with the other Boards, but with the Department of Health as well. Since 2023, the Department has had authority over the Board's infrastructure operations. This relationship has been extremely beneficial for the Board, allowing Board resources to go to the essential services on which our constituents depend. This bill flips that relationship, taking the licensing and other services away from the Board and housing it in the Department, and funneling resources from the Board to the Department, ultimately adding additional layers of bureaucracy between our constituents and the services they require.

For these reasons, the Board is voicing its concern with HB 1372 and requests the bill receive an unfavorable report by the committee. Thank you again for your time. 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".

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.