



Committee: Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Bill Number: Senate Bill 230
Title: Health Occupations – Service Members, Veterans, and Military Spouses –
Temporary License, Certifications, Registration, and Permitting
Hearing Date: February 1, 2022
Position: Support with Amendment

The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) supports *Senate Bill 230 – Health Occupation – Service Members, Veterans, and Military Spouses – Temporary License, Certification, Registration, and Permitting* with amendments.

MNA supports the bill’s underlying purpose to ease the administrative burden of active duty military members, veterans, and their spouses. As the law already allows, it is appropriate to expedite the licensure of military members, veterans, and spouses who meet Maryland licensure requirements. The bill includes a pathway for individuals who do not meet Maryland license requirements.

Temporary vs Permanent Licensure

The bill’s focus is on temporary licensure. MNA acknowledges that temporary licensure may be useful in some circumstances. However, the vast majority of military members, veterans, and spouses would benefit more from a permanent license issued expeditiously for the following reasons:

- **Requiring temporary licensure as a pathway to permanent licensure creates more paperwork.** In most cases, it may be simpler and less administratively burdensome for applicants to just apply and obtain permanent licensure. Otherwise, the applicant has to go through extra steps to transition from a temporary to a permanent license; and
- **Insurance Credentialing:** If the practitioner wants to become credentialed by an insurer, the practitioner will likely need permanent licensure. The practitioner may be able to practice under a temporary license but not bill insurance.

Importance of Meeting Licensure Qualifications

MNA believes that the integrity of our health care system depends on having qualified practitioners delivering care. Therefore, we generally believe that practitioners should meet licensure requirements before practicing. MNA's priority is to ensure practitioners have met core educational related requirements, sometimes referred to as substantially similar requirements

We do understand that someone could be qualified but that circumstances prevent them from having submitted all the appropriate documentation. For example, Maryland law allows a registered nurse to practice on a temporary license for 90 days while waiting for the results of a criminal history record check. The check is conducted by another agency, and the nurse applicant and Maryland Board of Nursing have no control on how quickly the background check is processed. We know this is a common licensing barrier faced by military families, and there may be other similar barriers that we should identify and ensure are addressed by the bill.

Potential Amendments – Balancing Need for Flexibility and Importance of Licensure Requirements

The Maryland Nurses Association believes that that core licensure requirements should not be waived as contemplated under 1-702.2.4 in the bill. Practitioners – whether nurses or some other type of clinician – should meet basic educational and related requirements – before providing services to patients.

We have met with the bill sponsor, and we have spoken with practitioners who have met challenges with licensing during a military move to Maryland. There are many positive aspects of the bill's focus. While MNA does not support the provision that would allow for the waiver of educational requirements, we think there could be amendments that preserve the underlying intent and address MNA's concerns. We are committed to working with the bill sponsor, the Committee, and military families who have experienced these challenges on amendments that would move this issue forward.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony. If we can provide further assistance, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net or (443) 926-3443.