



Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists & Music Therapists

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Secretary

Carolyn Stine, Chair – Oluremi Dean, Executive Director
4201 Patterson Avenue, Baltimore MD 21215 Phone: 410-764-4725

March 3, 2022

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Chair, House Health and Government Operations
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: HB 1130 – Health Occupations – Prohibition on Expiration of Licenses, Certificates, Permits, and Registrations – Letter of Concern

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Committee Members:

The Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists & Music Therapists (the Board) is submitting this letter of concern for House Bill (HB) 1130 – Health Occupations – Prohibition on Expiration of Licenses, Certificates, Permits, and Registrations.

The Board supports the General Assembly’s initiative to assist the Health Occupations Boards with navigating through the restoration of the Maryland Department of Health’s (MDH) network. Ensuring applications are reviewed thoroughly and in a timely manner are one of our top priorities. It’s vital that qualified clinicians are able to begin providing services to consumers awaiting their assistance. However, not all Boards are experiencing a backlog or interference with issuing licenses at this time. Perhaps, specifying the Boards in need of emergency assistance would better serve and protect the public.

The Board was able to quickly develop contingency plans to maintain its daily operations by reviewing and approving licenses manually. The Board’s IT staff was then able to quickly regain full functionality of the licensing system. Therefore, all licenses have been issued within three to five days of final approval. Since the Board is currently functioning near full capacity, allowing licenses to practice on an expired license due to the cyberattack is not warranted. Licensees are able to renew their licenses without any delays caused by the security incident. Allowing licensees to continue practicing on an expired license until the Department of Information Technology restores MDH’s systems, will cause unnecessary confusion for the Board’s licensees and staff. Also, the Department of Information Technology has not shared when the network or servers will be restored.

For these reasons, the Board is concerned that licensees may either misinterpret or abuse this emergency bill, using it as a justification not to renew their license on time. While the Board

appreciates the consideration and assistance offered in the proposed bill, the Board is fully capable of handling all renewal applications received.

Therefore, this Board, in addition to the State Board of Acupuncture; the State Board of Massage Therapy Examiners; the State Board of Examiners of Nursing Home Administrators; the State Board of Occupational Therapy Practice; the State Board of Physical Therapy Examiners; the State Board of Podiatric Medical Examiners; the State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists; and the State Board of Examiners of Psychologists urge for an unfavorable report on HB 1130.

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact the Board's Executive Director, Ms. Oluremi Dean, MHA at Oluremi.Dean@maryland.gov or 443-844-7172.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Oluremi Dean".

Oluremi Dean, MHA
Executive Director
State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers,
Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists

The opinion of the Boards expressed in this letter of information does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.