

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 986
Health

(Delegate Terrasa)

Nurse Licensure - Educational Requirements - Enforcement

This bill requires an applicant for licensure by endorsement from the State Board of Nursing (MBON) to provide adequate evidence, including official transcripts, that the applicant’s educational credentials meet specified requirements. The bill expands the disciplinary grounds on which MBON may take disciplinary action against an applicant or licensee to include failure to complete specified educational requirements. The bill also specifies that the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) may not be construed to limit the authority of MBON to (1) investigate the qualifications of an applicant or a licensee, including the sufficiency of the applicant’s nursing education or (2) take appropriate disciplinary action against an interstate licensee, including denial or revocation of licensure.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The change is technical in nature and does not directly affect governmental finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Generally, an individual must be licensed and/or certified by MBON to practice specified nursing duties in the State. MBON is responsible for the regulation and oversight of nursing professionals in the State, ensuring that nurses comply with federal and State laws governing the profession through the regulation and oversight of education

and training programs and by taking disciplinary action against licensees and certificate holders when warranted.

Licensure by Endorsement

MBON may issue a license by endorsement and waive any appropriate examination requirement for an applicant who has an active unencumbered registered nurse (RN) or licensed practical nurse (LPN) license in any other state or country if the applicant:

- submits to the board an application on the form the board requires;
- submits to a criminal history records check;
- pays the application fee set by the board; and
- provides adequate evidence that they (1) at the time they graduated from a nursing education program, the program was substantially equivalent to the education program approved in Maryland; (2) passed an examination at the time they were licensed that is similar to the Maryland examination; and (3) meet the qualifications otherwise required.

Chapters 731 and 732 of 2025 clarified that an applicant may hold a valid, unencumbered multistate license under the NLC as an alternative to providing the evidence specified above to qualify for licensure by endorsement.

Chapter 416 of 2025 specified that, if an applicant for licensure as an RN by endorsement cannot provide evidence that the nursing program they graduated from was substantially equivalent to the education program approved in Maryland, the applicant may still qualify for licensure by endorsement if the applicant has:

- completed satisfactorily and met all requirements for an associate or a baccalaureate degree in registered nursing from a college or university that, at the time of the applicant's graduation, is (1) accredited by a national or regional nursing accreditation agency recognized by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and (2) approved by MBON or an applicable state regulator in the state in which the program is located; and
- completed a minimum number of direct patient care practice hours as required by regulations adopted by MBON.

Disciplinary Actions

Subject to specified hearing provisions, MBON may deny a license or grant a license, including a license subject to reprimand, probation, or suspension, to an applicant,

reprimand a licensee, place a licensee on probation, or suspend or revoke the license of a licensee if, among other things, the applicant or licensee violates any one of 36 disciplinary grounds.

Nurse Licensure Compact

Since 1999, Maryland has participated in NLC, which currently has 43 participating states and territories. Under NLC, a multistate license authorizes an individual to practice as an RN or an LPN in a remote state. Licenses are issued by the home state.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Health; Department of Legislative Services

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jg/jc

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