

January 24, 2022

TO: Chairman Tomlinson, Madam Chair Boscola, and Members of the Senate Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee

FROM: Heather Tyler, Vice President, State Legislative Advocacy

SUBJECT: Support for HB 889: International Nursing Licensure Exam Requirements

On behalf of more than 240 members statewide, The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania (HAP) expresses its support for House Bill 889, sponsored by Representative Brett Miller (R-Lancaster). This measure has passed the House and is scheduled for consideration in the Senate Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee tomorrow, January 25.

House Bill 889 requires the State Board of Nursing to allow graduates of international professional nursing education programs to sit for the RN licensure exam, provided the person completed a program that is determined to be equivalent to that which is required in Pennsylvania. By doing so, the bill removes an existing licensing barrier in Pennsylvania that requires graduates of international nursing programs to have already been licensed in their home country or engage in another state's regulatory process prior to sitting for Pennsylvania's RN licensure exam.

It is well known that the health care workforce shortage is in a state of crisis in Pennsylvania. And while the workforce shortage is not new, the COVID-19 pandemic has exponentially magnified the crisis. Pennsylvania hospitals have recently reported a 29 percent increase in nurse vacancy rate and a 37 percent increase in turnover rate from 2019 to 2021.

This legislation directly reflects the recommendations from a 2020 [report](#) from HAP's Health Care Talent Task Force, which examined the challenges affecting Pennsylvania health care. The task force concluded that pursuing Pennsylvania's recognition of international medical graduates' degrees would help to expand the commonwealth's talent pipeline and address acute areas of need.

It is critical to the health of Pennsylvanians that the commonwealth works to get as many well-qualified nurses into the workforce as quickly as possible.

On behalf of Pennsylvania hospitals, as well as the graduates of international nursing programs and the patients they serve, we respectfully ask that you vote yes on House Bill 889.