



MARYLAND CITIZENS' HEALTH INITIATIVE

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 938  
BEFORE THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Catherine Kirk Robins, Deputy Director of the Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative, Inc.

March 5, 2020

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 938. The Maryland Citizens Health Initiative is committed to ensuring that all Marylanders have access to quality, affordable health care. A critical piece to achieving that goal is a skilled and able health care workforce. As health care delivery systems change, Maryland faces staffing shortages in non-hospital settings, while hospital-based employment has waned. This not only diminishes the quality of existing health care services, but also leaves dedicated, entry-level health care workers without a job or the training necessary to adjust to shifting employment opportunities.

SB 938 remedies this issue by ensuring investments in the existing Hospital Employees Retraining Program are put towards re-training hospital workers before they lose their current job. Currently, the fund is underused, meaning employees do not receive the re-training they have a right to, and hospital closings can threaten the livelihood and stability of these employees. SB 938 will strengthen Maryland's health care workforce, assist workers in career advancement, and ultimately ensure that we provide Maryland patients with quality care.

We thank Senator Hayes for introducing this important legislation and urge a favorable report by the committee.