



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE**
March 5, 2020
House Bill 1457: Apprenticeship Start-Up Act of 2020
Written Testimony Only

POSITION: SUPPORT

On behalf of the members of the Health Facilities Association of Maryland (HFAM), we appreciate the opportunity to express our support for House Bill 1457. There is tremendous potential for young people in Maryland to engage early in career-focused apprenticeships that result in rewarding careers. The Apprenticeship Start-Up Act of 2020 advances our public policy work to that end.

HFAM represents over 170 skilled nursing centers and assisted living communities in Maryland, as well as nearly 80 associate businesses that offer products and services to healthcare providers. Our members provide services and employ individuals in nearly every jurisdiction in the state. HFAM members provide quality and cost-efficient care to the majority of the 5.8 million total Medicaid patient days in Maryland skilled nursing and rehabilitation centers annually.

The level of commitment and service provided in skilled nursing and rehabilitation centers depends on round-the-clock efforts of the caring, compassionate, dedicated, and well-trained professionals for whom service to elders is a core mission. The Maryland long-term and post-acute care workforce, made up of approximately 30,000 individuals from dietary staff and housekeepers to nursing staff and physicians, saves lives and contributes to the well-being of the residents under their care.

Healthcare, and more specifically post-acute and long-term care, is a people-helping-people enterprise and there is no substitute for the personal touch and smile of a well-trained caregiver. Additionally, healthcare offers tremendous opportunities for trained workers, right out of school and through college, with many career-advancing opportunities.

It is important to note that long-term and post-acute care patients who receive quality care in Maryland skilled nursing and rehabilitation centers are medically complex. These friends, relatives, and neighbors would most often otherwise be receiving care in hospitals at much higher costs. Like all healthcare organizations, HFAM and our members are very concerned about meeting workforce needs both now and going forward. Registered nurses and new nursing home administrators are just two positions of many that, based on our data and experience, we are not on track to fill demand in the near-term future.

For these reasons, we support House Bill 1457 the Apprenticeship Start-Up Act of 2020.

Submitted by:

Joseph DeMattos, Jr.
President and CEO
410-290-5132