



Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Mid-Atlantic States, Inc
2101 East Jefferson Street
Rockville, Maryland 20852

February 10, 2022

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Health and Government Operations Committee
House Office Building Room 240
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB 407 – Support

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Members of the Committee:

Kaiser Permanente is pleased to support HB 407: “Health Occupations - Health Care Staffing Shortage Emergency - Declaration and Licensing and Practice Requirements (Health Care Heroes Act of 2022).”

Kaiser Permanente is the largest private integrated health care delivery system in the United States, delivering health care to over 12 million members in eight states and the District of Columbia.¹ Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States, which operates in Maryland, provides and coordinates complete health care services for approximately 800,000 members. In Maryland, we deliver care to over 460,000 members.

The COVID-19 pandemic illuminated some of the challenges that Maryland faces in scaling up a health care workforce capable of meeting the demands of a catastrophic health emergency. A surge in demand by patients needing treatment for COVID-19 has repeatedly threatened to exceed health system capacity. Meanwhile, some patients who were hesitant to receive care in-person have had difficulty accessing care through telehealth, because of lack of access to broadband or other barriers. Provider licensing delays have exacerbated challenges for telehealth since healthcare providers are required to obtain a license in the state that the patient is located. The lack of mobility caused by state licensing also prevented healthcare providers from moving to hard hit areas early, further limiting the care that could be provided in these areas.

Senate Bill 407 addresses these concerns by creating a process whereby the Secretary of Health may adjust licensure requirements upon declaration of a health care staffing shortage emergency. As drafted, all of Kaiser Permanente’s health care workforce in the mid-Atlantic region, including 1,700 physicians, would be able to take advantage of these flexibilities if need be. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report for HB 407.

¹ Kaiser Permanente comprises Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc., the nation’s largest not-for-profit health plan, and its health plan subsidiaries outside California and Hawaii; the not-for-profit Kaiser Foundation Hospitals, which operates 39 hospitals and over 650 other clinical facilities; and the Permanente Medical Groups, self-governed physician group practices that exclusively contract with Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and its health plan subsidiaries to meet the health needs of Kaiser Permanente’s members.

Kaiser Permanente
Comments on HB 407
February 2022

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please feel free to contact me at Allison.W.Taylor@kp.org or (202) 924-7496 with questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Allison Taylor".

Allison Taylor
Director of Government Relations
Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Mid-Atlantic States, Inc.