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March 4, 2022

The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair
House Ways and Means Committee
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: House Bill 1231 - Public Schools - Student Health Professional Retention Program - Established

Position: Favorable with Amendments

Dear Chair Atterbeary,

The American Physical Therapy Association Maryland is writing in support of House Bill 1231 with amendments. APTA MD supports the goal and intent of the bill to establish "and provide for the administration of and funding for the Student Health Professional Retention Program."

Physical therapists provide critically important services in the school-based setting and work closely with our fellow school-based health professionals in providing care to students across the State. Given the multiple stakeholders enumerated in the bill and the respective requirements for each profession's State licensure, we feel that more time is needed to develop the guiding framework for the program.

We support the study as outlined in Section 2 of the bill and offer the following as additional issues to be considered and recommendations developed:

- In determining levels and indicators of advancement, examine how to align credentials with experience in the school system;
- Examine what limitations in advanced credential opportunities may exist within the respective health professions and how that may impact advancement to higher levels;
- Examine how this incentive program aligns with existing compensation step programs in each County Board of Education; and
- Examine and make recommendations regarding payment and incentive programs to ensure transparency and ease of applicability across all County Boards of Education.

We ask that APTA MD be included as an interested stakeholder in the study with MSDE, MDH, and the health occupation boards included in the bill.

We look forward to working with the Bill Sponsor and the other stakeholders on this very important bill. For these reasons we ask for a favorable report on House Bill 1231 with these amendments.

Sincerely,

JD Sheppard

John D. Sheppard, II, PT, DPT, President, APTA Maryland