



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

February 14, 2023

Senate Bill 370: Certified Nursing Assistants – Licensing Requirements and Administrative Updates
Written Only Testimony

POSITION: FAVORABLE

On behalf of the members of the Health Facilities Association of Maryland (HFAM), we appreciate the opportunity to express our support for Senate Bill 370. HFAM represents skilled nursing centers and assisted living communities in Maryland, as well as associate businesses that offer products and services to healthcare providers. Our members provide services and employ individuals in nearly every jurisdiction of the state.

Senate Bill 370 repeals references to “geriatric nursing assistant” (GNA) and replaces them with certified nursing assistant (CNA). The bill alters the definition of “CNA” to specify that a CNA has successfully completed an “approved nursing assistant training program. The definition of “approved nursing assistant training program” is altered to mean a course of training that meets the basic nursing assistant curriculum required under federal and State law.

The Maryland State Board of Nursing (MBON) is required to notify GNAs regarding the changes resulting from this legislation’s passage, update GNA to CNA on licensure renewals, update regulations in consultation with the Office of Health Care Quality, and notify nursing homes that they are permitted to employ MBON-certified CNAs who successfully complete an approved nursing assistant training program without the designation of GNA to perform delegated tasks.

In Maryland and throughout the country, we are facing a shortage of healthcare workers across settings, with particularly fewer people working in skilled nursing and rehabilitation centers. Workforce recruitment and retention was a challenge before the pandemic and it has only grown more challenging. Licensed healthcare professionals are scarce and all healthcare settings are competing for employees from the same labor pool.

To become a CNA in most states, an individual must complete a state-approved training program, take a federal exam, and complete a state certification exam. Once a licensed, the CNA may work in most healthcare settings including both hospitals and nursing homes. However, in order to work in a Maryland nursing home, an individual must complete an additional certification step to become a licensed GNA.

This legislation will eliminate the extra step for nursing assistants to work in a Maryland nursing home. CNAs will be able to work in all healthcare settings and this legislation will broaden the pool of qualified applicants for positions in nursing homes. Additionally, it will allow out of state CNAs to be qualified to work in a Maryland nursing home without additional certification.

These changes will be help address the staffing shortages faced by Maryland nursing homes. Nursing assistants are truly the backbone of the nursing home workforce – they keep things running smoothly and provide quality care to residents and patients. Removing barriers to entry for nursing assistants in long-term care settings is a critical and important step we can take now that will help with the ongoing workforce shortage.

For these reasons, we request a favorable report from the Committee on Senate Bill 370.

Submitted by:

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