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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SB 370

Certified Nursing Assistants – Licensing Requirements & Administrative Updates

Good Afternoon Chair Griffith, Vice Chair Klausmeier and Members of Finance;

Thank you for the opportunity to present Senate Bill 370, Certified Nursing Assistants – Licensing Requirements & Administrative Updates. This bill seeks to address a critical issue that has been a theme for this legislative session – the healthcare worker shortage.

As a member of the Oversight Committee on Quality Care in Nursing Homes and Assisted Living as well as the Commission to Study the Health Care Workforce Crisis in Maryland, we have repeatedly heard the difficulties nursing homes experience hiring staff, ultimately, forcing them to rely on more expensive nurse staffing agencies.

This issue simply doesn't affect the nursing homes; it affects all other settings. For example, hospitals have reported that patients are staying in the hospitals longer because nursing homes cannot staff all their beds. This affects our ability to be successful in controlling costs under our All Payor Waiver.

In order to ensure that nursing homes can be appropriately and adequately staffed, we must eliminate any barriers. One such barrier is the ability or inability for nursing homes to employ certified nursing assistants (known as CNAs). Nationally, CNAs can work in all settings. However, Maryland is the only state that does not allow a CNA to work in a nursing home. Rather, to work in a nursing home, Maryland requires an individual to be a geriatric nursing assistant, which can be viewed as an "add-on" to the certification for a nursing assistant. If all other states allow CNAs to work in nursing homes, shouldn't Maryland?

Senate Bill 370 makes necessary changes to allow CNAs to work in nursing homes, it does not reduce training requirements for those working in nursing homes. Federal regulations require that those who work in nursing homes satisfy certain training requirements. In order to be

approved as a CNA Training Program, a vendor must comply with these federal regulations. The emphasis in this bill is to remove administrative steps that accompany this additional designation.

The hope for this bill is that it will create fluidity for the worker to be able to move between health care settings, increase the workforce that nursing homes can hire and hopefully stop individuals from leaving Maryland to go to work in neighboring states.

I respectfully request a favorable vote on SB 370.