



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 22, 2023

To: The Honorable Joseline Peña-Melnyk, Chair, House Health & Government Operations Committee

Re: Letter of Support - House Bill 278- Health Occupations - Clinical Nurse Specialists - Prescribing

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to support House Bill 278.

Maryland hospitals are facing the most critical staffing shortage in recent memory. A 2022 [GlobalData](#) report estimates a statewide shortage of 5,000 full-time registered nurses and 4,000 licensed practical nurses. Without intervention, shortages could double or even triple by 2035. MHA's [2022 State of Maryland's Health Care Workforce report](#) outlines a roadmap to ensure Maryland has the health care workforce it needs now and into the future. Two recommendation focus areas include retaining the health care workforce and leveraging talent with new care models. HB 278 supports both of these focus areas by allowing clinical nurse specialists (CNS) to practice at the top of their license in alignment with other advanced practice registered nurses.

Clinical nurse specialists (CNS) play an important role in patient care delivery within hospitals and serve as clinical leaders focusing on improving systems and patient outcomes.¹ These important health care providers are educators, researchers, and case managers who often lead interdisciplinary teams and support patients and families in inpatient and outpatient settings.² HB 278 would authorize a CNS to have prescriptive authority, which is on par with other advanced practice registered nurses licensed in the state. This legislation would also ensure the state has similar prescriptive authority as our border states. Delaware, West Virginia, and Washington, DC allow CNS' to have prescriptive authority.³ HB 278 would support our current and future health care workforce and potentially help recruit more clinical nurse specialists to the state.

For these reasons, we request a *favorable* report on HB 278.

For more information, please contact:

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¹ Johns Hopkins School of Nursing. (n.d.). "[NP and CNS Role Comparison](#),".

² Johns Hopkins School of Nursing (September 6, 2019). "[What Is a Clinical Nurse Specialist?](#)".

³ National Council of State Boards of Nursing. (September 7, 2022). "[CNS Independent Prescribing Map](#),".