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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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**Testimony in support of SB 1020 - Hospitals – Clinical Staffing Committees and Plans –
Establishment (Safe Staffing Act of 2024)**

Clinical staffing is one of the most urgent issues our state faces. Our essential workers are routinely being burned out by the sheer quantity of patients, long hours, and stressful shifts day after day. Moreover, our nurses are forced to face these poor working conditions for relatively low pay and during chronic understaffing. A study by the Journal of the American Medical Association found that this overstaffing drastically reduces job satisfaction, increases burnout, and overall worse quality work.

This issue is not only one of workers but a universal one. Overworked nurses are more likely to provide a lower quality of service, commit more errors, and create longer waiting times for patients seeking urgent care. Now more than ever, it is imperative that nurses voices are heard. Workers should be empowered to make decisions in times of crisis, where it has been clear that the current methods of staffing are only leading to a troublesome shortage.

Similar legislation in other states have been found to have a profound impact on worker satisfaction and retention, where workers feel as if their workplace has improved transparency, better conditions, and less turnover. Most importantly, hospitals did not see a rise in costs, as similar measures often led to a re-working of schedule rather than an increase in hours for workers.

Every person deserves a workplace that values their input, and this legislation will help our nurses have an impactful voice in their workplace. No essential worker should be suffering from burnout for our health, and thus we must provide them with as much care as they provide us. Furthermore, quality healthcare is a right that every Marylander should enjoy, and we cannot let current staffing shortages and confusion get in the way of that right.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable committee report on SB 1020.