



TO: Health & Government Operations Committee
Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair
March 6, 2024

Finance Committee
Senator Pamela Beidle, Chair
March 7, 2024

FROM: Kristin J. Bryce, SVP Chief External Affairs Officer
University of Maryland Medical System

RE: House Bill 1006 and SB0874 - Hospitals and Ambulatory Surgical Facilities – Surgical Technologists

POSITION: Unfavorable

The University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC) appreciates the opportunity to comment on House Bill 1006. HB 1006 would prohibit hospitals and ambulatory surgical centers from hiring a surgical tech who has not completed a specified program.

Surgical Technologists (STs), also called operating room technicians, assist in the preparation of the operating room for the nearly 29,000 operative procedures done at our 2 locations. STs assist by reviewing the surgeon preference list and conferring with the circulating nurse to gather appropriate equipment. They may assist with preoperative preparation of patients under the oversight of the circulating nurse, such as skin preparation, draping and positioning. They assist the surgeon throughout the surgical procedure by handing instruments to the surgeon, receiving specimens, and accounting for all instruments and needles on the sterile field. They are a critical part of the team providing surgical care to our patients.

While UMMC recruits STs from multiple sources, the pool of experienced techs in the current Baltimore City marketplace is limited and in 2018 UMMC began a series of apprenticeship programs to address the shortage and provide career opportunities for our current employees and the surrounding community. These are a combination of certificate programs with community colleges, a partnership with the Edmondson Westside High School

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UM Laurel Regional Hospital • UM Prince George's Hospital Center • UM Charles Regional Medical Center • UM Shore Medical Center at Easton
UM Shore Medical Center at Dorchester • UM Shore Medical Center at Chestertown • UM St. Joseph Medical Center • UM Upper Chesapeake Medical Center
UM Harford Memorial Hospital • UM Rehabilitation & Orthopaedic Institute • Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital

National Center for Competency Testing (NCCT) Certified program, and online programs such as Med Certs.

All of these apprenticeships prepare our trainees for certification through NCCT.

UMMC currently has 70 budgeted ST FTEs and a current vacancy rate of 41%. Currently there are 12.8 FTEs of Surgical Tech Trainees in apprenticeship programs that will reduce this rate to 25% over the next several months. UMMC plans to begin the next wave of trainees with another large cohort in the late spring / early summer to continue to address this high vacancy rate.

Addressing Maryland's health care workforce shortages requires creative solutions that meet people where they are as they enter the workforce, ensure all providers are practicing at the top of their license, and creating career pathways. Limiting entry options for surgical techs is counterproductive to these initiatives. The restrictions that HB 1006 and SB0874 will place on UMMC will make these apprenticeship programs obsolete and will be detrimental to patient care in Baltimore City. It will also be detrimental to the people in the Baltimore community who have used our apprenticeship program as the starting point for careers in health care.

For these reasons, we ask for an unfavorable report on HB 1006 and SB0874