



March 14, 2024

To: The Senate Finance Committee
From: Adventist HealthCare
Re: SB1020 Hospitals – Clinical Staffing Committees and Plans

Position: OPPOSE

Adventist HealthCare respectfully opposes SB1020. Maryland hospitals face many challenges impacting patient care, and we must ensure hospitals continue to have the flexibility, resources, and ability to innovate as we work to ensure continued access to care for our patients.

Hospitals in Maryland and across the country are facing a workforce crisis. An estimated 1 in 4 nursing positions in the state are vacant and the shortfall is growing as we anticipate needing an additional 14,000 nurses and over 9,000 LPNs by 2035. The crisis goes beyond nursing, impacting doctors and medical specialists across the board. The workforce crisis only exacerbates inpatient and post-acute capacity challenges facing Maryland hospitals which in turn fuel throughput issues leading to extended wait times in emergency rooms. Facing these issues requires hospitals to be flexible and innovative as we work to ensure continued access to care for our patients. Adhering to strict staffing ratios will hamper our ability to respond in real time to last-minute staffing changes and fluctuations in patient demand.

If hospitals are unable to meet demands for care because they must adhere to predetermined staffing levels, more Maryland patients will be stuck in emergency rooms waiting for care. With limited access, more patients will be forced to either delay care or travel outside the state seeking treatment. Delaying care drives poor health outcomes and seeking care out of state adds increased costs to the Maryland system as care is often more expensive outside the state.

Adventist HealthCare values our team members and is proud to have been declared a best place to work by both Forbes and The Washington Post. We are committed to continuing to work to improve the care environment for our patients and staff. We also will continue working with stakeholders, including our elected official partners, to build a strong healthcare workforce. To ensure continued access to care as we do this important work, we respectfully request a negative report on SB1020.

