

## **Senate Bill 0874 – Hospitals and Ambulatory Surgical Facilities – Surgical Technologists**

**Position:** *Oppose*

March 6, 2024

Senate Finance Committee

### **Maryland Ambulatory Surgery Association Position**

Senate Bill 0874 would prohibit ambulatory surgical centers and hospitals from hiring a surgical tech who has not completed a specified program, and create more roadblocks to the already existing shortage existing in the state's operating rooms.

Surgical technologists, also known as operating room technicians, work alongside and assist surgeons, nurses, and other members of the health care team throughout a surgical procedure. They are responsible for the sterility of an operating room and the organization of the room and its contents. They assure all the necessary instruments, implants and medical supplies are present for the surgery, and accounted for after the surgery is completed. They are responsible for the equipment to be in working order prior to the commencement of a surgical procedure.

There are various ways one can enter the profession which programs at community colleges, vocational schools, universities, hospitals, ambulatory surgical centers, workforce intermediary programs like EARN, high schools, and the military. These various options for entering the health care workforce enables those with different life experiences to become a successful, and integral part of a health care team. These jobs often lead to higher level jobs such as supervisory roles or specialization of an operating room team for certain procedures or specialties of medicine.

Currently, ambulatory surgery centers are experiencing a vacancy rate of 16 percent higher than vacancy rate than that of licensed nurses. Limiting the options for entering the surgical tech profession would make this situation worse and likely to limit opportunities for individuals wanting to enter the health care workforce as well as, promote early retirement for those towards the latter part of their career.

Addressing Maryland's health care workforce shortages requires creative solutions that meet individuals as they enter the workforce, and ensures all providers are practicing at the top of their scope of practice, and creating career pathways. Limiting entry options for surgical techs is counterproductive to these initiatives.

For these reasons, we ask for an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 0874.