

# **SB 718\_Pathways to Nursing\_Support.pdf**

Uploaded by: Allison Taylor

Position: FAV



Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Mid-Atlantic States, Inc  
2101 East Jefferson Street  
Rockville, Maryland 20852

February 20, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle  
Senate Finance Committee  
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: SB 718 – Support**

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Committee:

Kaiser Permanente is pleased to support SB 718, “Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program and Advisory Committee - Establishment.”

Kaiser Permanente is the largest private integrated health care delivery system in the United States, delivering health care to over 12 million members in eight states and the District of Columbia.<sup>1</sup> Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States, which operates in Maryland, provides and coordinates complete health care services for over 825,000 members. In Maryland, we deliver care to approximately 475,000 members.

The nursing profession is facing persistent workforce shortages, exacerbated by factors such as an aging population, increased healthcare needs, and retirements within the current nursing workforce. A Pathways to Nursing Program provides a strategic solution by streamlining the education and training process, enabling more individuals to enter the profession quickly and efficiently. This program facilitates a faster response to the growing healthcare demands.

Diversity in the nursing workforce is essential for providing culturally competent and patient-centered care. This program encourages individuals from diverse backgrounds, including underrepresented minorities and non-traditional students, to pursue a nursing career. By actively recruiting and supporting candidates from various ethnic, socioeconomic, and educational backgrounds, this program contributes to a more inclusive and representative nursing workforce.

A Pathways to Nursing Program contributes to reducing healthcare disparities by increasing the number of culturally competent and community-focused nurses. Graduates from diverse backgrounds are more likely to understand and address the unique healthcare needs of underserved communities, ultimately improving health outcomes and promoting equity within the healthcare system.

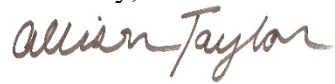
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<sup>1</sup> Kaiser Permanente comprises Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc., the nation’s largest not-for-profit health plan, and its health plan subsidiaries outside California and Hawaii; the not-for-profit Kaiser Foundation Hospitals, which operates 39 hospitals and over 650 other clinical facilities; and the Permanente Medical Groups, self-governed physician group practices that exclusively contract with Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and its health plan subsidiaries to meet the health needs of Kaiser Permanente’s members.

Kaiser Permanente  
Comments on SB 718  
February 20, 2024

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report for SB 718. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please feel free to contact me at [Allison.W.Taylor@kp.org](mailto:Allison.W.Taylor@kp.org) or (202) 924-7496 with questions.

Sincerely,

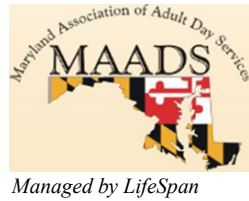
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Allison Taylor".

Allison Taylor  
Director of Government Relations  
Kaiser Permanente

**SB0718\_FAV\_LifeSpan, MAADS, MNCHA, HPCNM\_MD Pathwa**

Uploaded by: Danna Kauffman

Position: FAV



TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair  
Members, Senate Finance Committee  
The Honorable Clarence K. Lam

FROM: Danna L. Kauffman  
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
Christine K. Krone  
410-244-7000

DATE: February 20, 2024

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 718 – *Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program and Advisory Committee – Establishment*

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On behalf of the LifeSpan Network, the Maryland Association of Adult Day Services, the Maryland-National Capital Homecare Association, and the Hospice & Palliative Care Network of Maryland, we respectfully **support** Senate Bill 718, which creates a Maryland Pathway to Nursing Advisory Committee along with the corresponding Maryland Pathway to Nursing. The bill will establish two pilot programs in diverse geographical areas of the State with the purpose of assisting certified nursing assistants enrolled in licensed practical nursing programs with the resources to succeed and graduate from the program.

Maryland is facing a critical shortage of licensed practical nurses and registered nurses. The 2022 State of Maryland's Health Care Workforce Report indicates that, by 2035, an additional 13,800 registered nurses and an additional 9,200 licensed practical nurses will be needed. The three industries with the greatest demand are nursing homes, home health, and residential care. Too often, we hear stories of candidates that are forced to drop out of programs because they cannot afford to continue. Senate Bill 718 seeks to address some of these common resources so that Maryland can begin to address its shortfall.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable vote on Senate Bill 718.

**SB0718\_MACC\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Drew Jabin

Position: FAV

**Senate Finance Committee**  
February 20, 2024

**SB 718 - Maryland Pathway to Nursing Pilot Program and Advisory Committee -  
Establishment**

**Position: Favorable**

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The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland's 16 community colleges strongly supports **SB 718**, which seeks to address a piece of the critical healthcare workforce shortage in the state of Maryland. This legislation would establish the Maryland Pathway to Nursing Pilot Program in the Maryland Department of Health to provide support to nursing students, with community colleges hosting the pilot program in at least two geographically diverse areas in the state.

Maryland's community colleges stand ready to support the state's strategic goals in addressing the workforce shortage and appreciate our inclusion in the pilot program and as advisors to the Maryland Pathway to Nursing Advisory Committee.

Community colleges provide access to health care education for underrepresented populations and see it as part of our mission. This legislation would provide financial assistance for students pursuing these admirable career pathways, including wrap around services. These provisions would assist community colleges in providing these opportunities to more students and promote a workforce that better reflects the population it serves. Accordingly, MACC urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** vote on **SB 718**.

Please contact Brad Phillips ([bphillips@mdacc.org](mailto:bphillips@mdacc.org)) or Drew Jabin ([djabin@mdacc.org](mailto:djabin@mdacc.org)) with questions.

# **SB 718- Maryland Pathway to Nursing Pilot Program**

Uploaded by: Jake Whitaker

Position: FAV





Maryland  
Hospital Association

**Senate Bill 718- Maryland Pathway to Nursing Pilot Program and Advisory Committee  
– Establishment**

**Position: *Support***  
January 20, 2024  
Senate Finance Committee

**MHA Position**

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association’s (MHA) 62 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of Senate Bill 718.

Maryland hospitals continue to experience workforce shortages. The latest data show high vacancy rates in Maryland hospitals for:

- Licensed practical nurses (LPN), 16.8%
- Nurse practitioners, 12.3%
- Registered nurses (RN), 12.1%

Vacancies for RNs vary by region. In Southern Maryland, for example, the vacancy rate is more than double the statewide rate—30.6%. A 2022 GlobalData report estimates a statewide shortage of 5,000 full-time registered nurses and 4,000 licensed practical nurses<sup>1</sup>. 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 in the future<sup>2</sup>. The recommendations focus on four areas: expand Maryland’s workforce pipeline, remove barriers to health care education, retain the health care workforce, and leverage talent with new care models.

SB 718 provides a blueprint, aligned with MHA’s recommendations, to grow and diversify the nursing workforce pipeline. The Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program will invest in Marylanders interested in a nursing career, who commit to practice in the state. The program seeks to alleviate the workforce shortage, diversify the nursing workforce, and support program participants financially through assistance with basic living expenses like food, housing and transportation.

A diverse health care workforce improves access for underserved groups, improves health outcomes, and reduces disparities. Access to wraparound services (e.g., childcare, tutoring, transportation assistance) supports nontraditional students and individuals from underserved populations to access education and complete programs. On average 20% of nursing students will drop out, with most dropping out after the first semester<sup>3</sup>. The Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program addresses these social drivers to support success.

Before expanding statewide, the bill establishes pilot sites and creates an Advisory Committee to evaluate the time frame of the pilot, identify the focus areas and what resources are needed. This stepwise process will identify issues and address concerns prior to expanding statewide.

Maryland hospitals are engaging in creative and collaborative efforts to grow the workforce. For example, to address the high demand for certified nursing assistants (CNAs), many hospitals have designed an acute care CNA pathway to upskill their existing employees. Hospitals are partnering with community colleges to establish apprenticeship programs for high-demand positions. There is significant interest in all of these programs, but space is limited. This legislation will allow the state to build on the success of these programs, incorporate lessons learned, and help Maryland grow our own health care workforce.

Demand for health care services will only increase and will require a robust workforce across the care continuum. Between 2021 and 2035, demand for RNs is expected to grow 50% in nursing homes alone<sup>1</sup>. We need the state's support and investment now to ensure we have the health care workforce to care for all Marylanders

For more information, please contact:  
Jake Whitaker, Director, Government Affairs  
Jwhitaker@mhaonline.org

<sup>1</sup> GlobalData (June, 2022). [Maryland Nurse Workforce Projections: 2021-2035](#)

<sup>2</sup> MHA Workforce Survey – January 2023

<sup>3</sup> Nancy Elkins. Failure to Complete BSN Nursing Programs: Students' Views. 2019. Retrieved from [files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1252119.pdf](https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1252119.pdf).

**BaltimoreCounty\_FAV\_SB0718.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jenn Aiosa

Position: FAV

JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.  
*County Executive*



JENNIFER AIOSA  
*Director of Government Affairs*

AMANDA KONTZ CARR  
*Legislative Officer*

WILLIAM J. THORNE  
*Legislative Associate*

**BILL NO.:**            **SB 718**

**TITLE:**                Maryland Pathway to Nursing Pilot Program and Advisory  
Committee – Establishment

**SPONSOR:**            Senator Lam

**COMMITTEE:**        Finance

**POSITION:**           **SUPPORT**

**DATE:**                February 20, 2024

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 718 – Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program and Advisory Committee – Establishment. This legislation would create a statewide program that provides a pathway to career in health care for Maryland residents.

Baltimore County is proud to operate the Public Health Pathways Pilot program, a comprehensive program that provides a pathway to family-sustaining wages and a career in healthcare for under employed residents. In addition to free tuition, fees, books, and uniforms, our Public Health pathways program offers a customized school and work schedule, mentors and tutors, and a monthly stipend that allow our participants to address workforce barriers like housing and food instability. In one year of operating, 100% of program participants received their Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certification- significantly higher than the typical 75-80% completion rate. 100% of program participants were hired as full time CNAs will full benefits by the University of Maryland Medical System.

Before the Public Health Pathways pilot program, most program participants faced housing and income insecurity. With the monthly stipend and guaranteed full time employment, program participants are now making approximately \$3,500 a month and have full benefits including health insurance, paid time off, and retirement plans. Baltimore County is confident that the success of this program can be applied to a statewide program.

Accordingly, Baltimore County urges a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 718. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at [jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov](mailto:jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov).

# 2024 MASBHC SB 718 Senate Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Joy Twesigye

Position: FAV



**Committee:** Senate Finance Committee

**Bill:** Senate Bill 718 – Maryland Pathway to Nursing Pilot Program and Advisory Committee - Establishment

**Hearing Date:** February 20, 2024

**Position:** Support

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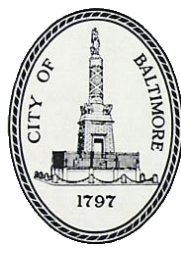
The Maryland Assembly on School-Based Health Centers (MASBHC) supports *Senate Bill 718 – Maryland Pathway to Nursing Pilot Program and Advisory Committee - Establishment*. This bill will create a Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program to increase the number of registered nursing students, registered nurses, and licensed practical nurses in the state. MASBHC supports this bill as a strategy to address health professional shortages in schools. In Maryland, there are over 85 school-based health centers (SBHCs) and many are under-staffed. Registered nurses and licensed practical nurses are qualified to work in SBHCs and having people with that skillset benefit the students utilizing the services.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net) or (443) 926-3443.

**SB0718-FIN-FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Nina Themelis

Position: FAV



BRANDON M. SCOTT  
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations  
88 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

**SB0718**

February 20, 2024

**TO:** Members of the Senate Finance Committee

**FROM:** Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

**RE:** Senate Bill 718 – Maryland Pathway to Nursing Pilot Program and Advisory Committee  
- Establishment

**POSITION: FAVORABLE**

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill 718.

SB 718 establishes a pathway to nursing pilot program (the Program) in the Maryland Department of Health and establishes a Pathway to Nursing Advisory Committee to assist the Maryland Secretary of Health with implementing the Program. The bill also requires the Secretary to issue grants to at least two program pilot sites. The Program is an innovative way to address nursing workforce shortages by focusing on the barriers that prevent Marylanders from pursuing careers in nursing.

Maryland hospitals continue to face critical staffing shortages. As of 2022, **more than 25% of hospital registered nurse (RN) positions were vacant in the state.**<sup>i</sup> Challenges include high staff turnover and **an insufficient nursing pipeline.** Barriers to nursing education include cost of tuition and lack of support services (such as transportation and childcare), both of which the Program would address via wraparound supports provided to students.<sup>i</sup> Another challenge for Maryland is a nursing workforce that does not reflect the diversity of our population.<sup>i</sup> The Program directly addresses this by creating a grants program for pilot sites in diverse areas for the Pathway to Nursing program, with the goal of increasing of nurses from diverse communities.

It is imperative that we solve this issue now. By 2035, the state will need 13,800 more registered nurses and 9,200 more licensed practical nurses.<sup>i</sup> SB 718 addresses these critical needs by directly tackling the barriers we know are preventing future caregivers from completing their nursing education.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable** report on SB 718.

<sup>i</sup> Maryland Hospital Association. (2022). 2022 State of Maryland's Health Care Workforce Report. Retrieved from <https://www.mhaonline.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/2022-state-of-maryland-s-health-care-workforce-report.pdf>



# **Testimony in support of SB0718.pdf**

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SB0718\_RichardKaplowitz\_FAV  
2/20/2022

Richard Keith Kaplowitz  
Frederick, MD 21703-7134

**TESTIMONY ON SB#0718 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**Maryland Pathway to Nursing Pilot Program and Advisory Committee – Establishment**

**TO:** Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and members of the Finance Committee

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

**My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0718, Maryland Pathway to Nursing Pilot Program and Advisory Committee – Establishment**

I am proud to support this bill as part of Governor Moore’s emphasis on service. “Currently, Maryland is facing a critical shortage of nurses in our health care system. The 2022 State of Maryland’s Health Care Workforce Report stated “1 in every 4 hospital nursing positions is vacant”, “- 13,800 additional RNs needed by 2035 - 9,200 additional LPNs needed by 2035” and “62% of surveyed Maryland Board of Nursing licensees and certificate holders thought about leaving nursing recently”.<sup>1</sup>

This bill is a tool Maryland can and should implement to help alleviate this shortage by creating pilot programs to study how to find solutions and collect data the Governor and General Assembly can use to guide future decisions. It can be the first step in fixing a defined problem.

The importance of finding the numbers of nurses we need now and, in the future, will help us solve some of the challenges around quality health care in Maryland.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB0718.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mhaonline.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/2022-state-of-maryland-s-health-care-workforce-report.pdf>

# **2024 MNA SB 718 Senate Side.pdf**

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FAV



**Senate Finance Committee**  
**Senate Bill 718 – Maryland Pathway to Nursing Pilot Program and Advisory Committee -**  
**Establishment**  
**February 20, 2024**  
**Support**

The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) strongly supports *Senate Bill 718 – Maryland Pathway to Nursing Pilot Program and Advisory Committee - Establishment*. The bill creates a program to support nursing students early in their educational career in becoming licensed practical nurses (LPNs).

We are facing a nursing shortage at a crisis level. According to an evaluation by the Maryland Hospital Association, we need 5,000 registered nurses (RNs) and 4,000 licensed practical nurses in today’s workforce in Maryland. In just over 10 years, the shortage is expected to grow to 13,800 RNs and 9,200 LPNs.<sup>i</sup> Maryland has been a leader in innovation in health care systems, but our path forward will be challenging because of the nursing shortage.

**A Root Cause of the Nursing Shortage: Attrition from Nursing Schools**

Addressing the nursing shortage requires a multi-prong strategy to address the root causes of the shortage. One critical problem is attrition from nursing educational programs. Many nursing education programs are full. In the 2016-2020 period, 74% of associate degree programs report turning away qualified applicants.<sup>ii</sup> Nursing schools are at capacity because of the lack of faculty and clinical placements for students.

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*“Every nursing student who leaves before completing their courses is not only a loss to the college or university, but also a potential loss to the nursing workforce and community.”*

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With the shortage of capacity at nursing schools, every student counts. We cannot afford to lose students, yet attrition rates in nursing education programs are as high as 25%. “Every nursing student who leaves before completing their courses is not only a loss to the college or university, but also a potential loss to the nursing workforce and community.”<sup>iii</sup>

## Identifying the Factors Contributing to Attrition from Nursing Schools:

There are multiple factors to attrition from nursing schools. Nursing school attrition rates are high because:

- **Older Students Mean More Family Commitments.** Many nursing students are older, and nursing may be a second career. In community college nursing programs, 42% of students are 30 years of age or older.<sup>iv</sup> Older students have advantages, as they bring maturity and a depth of experience to their studies. However, older students are also more likely to have family commitments including child care and elder care.<sup>v</sup>
- **Working Students Face More Challenges:** Nursing school is rigorous, requiring a significant amount of time to focus on both the didactic and supervised clinical education components. Many nursing students enter the field as certified nursing assistants (CNAs). For these students, “(w)ork hours are patchworks of part-time work coupled with demanding stretches of overtime.”<sup>vi</sup> Studies show that working more than 15 hours a week increased the risk of failure in nursing school.<sup>vii</sup>
- **Race factors into high attrition rates.** Attrition rates for nursing school are higher for Black and brown students. The reasons are multi-faceted and include lack of mentors, more challenges with work and family commitments, and a higher likelihood of English being a second language.<sup>viii</sup>

## Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program: Boosting the Success of Nursing Students through Stackable Credentials

The Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program is designed to boost the success of nursing students early in their educational careers. The program will customize supports for students to allow them to complete their (LPN) degree. With an LPN degree, nurses can make meaningful contributions to the nursing field. At the same time, they are better-positioned to complete their pathway to become an RN as they will have: 1) a higher degree of financial security; 2) a firm grounding in the skillset needed for academic success; and 3) clinical experience relevant to their studies. Through a system of “stackable credentials”, individuals can progress in their nursing careers while working.

We ask for a favorable report. The Maryland Pathways to Nursing Program offers an innovative strategy to boost the success of nursing students and reduce the nursing shortage. If we can provide additional information as the Committee considers this important legislation, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net).

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<sup>i</sup> *Maryland Nurse Workforce Projections: 2021-2035* (2022). Maryland Hospital Association. <https://www.mhaonline.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/maryland-nurse-workforce-projections-globaldata.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> [https://www.nln.org/docs/default-source/uploadedfiles/research-statistics/percentage-of-programs-that-turned-away-qualified-applicants-2016-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=2441a10d\\_0](https://www.nln.org/docs/default-source/uploadedfiles/research-statistics/percentage-of-programs-that-turned-away-qualified-applicants-2016-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=2441a10d_0)

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.proquest.com/openview/34def0879a504c42609100bdb4b7d8fe/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>

<sup>iv</sup> [https://www.nln.org/docs/default-source/uploadedfiles/newsroom/nursing-education-statistics/percentage-of-students-over-age-30-by-program-type-2014-pdf.pdf?sfvrsn=c55d10d\\_0](https://www.nln.org/docs/default-source/uploadedfiles/newsroom/nursing-education-statistics/percentage-of-students-over-age-30-by-program-type-2014-pdf.pdf?sfvrsn=c55d10d_0)

<sup>v</sup> Jeffreys, M.R. (2012). *Nursing student retention: Understanding the process and making a difference*. New York, NY: Springer

<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/we-need-to-fix-the-broken-nursing-career-pathwayheres-how/>

<sup>vii</sup> Carnevale, A. P., & Smith, N. (2018). *Balancing work and learning: Implications for low-income students*. Georgetown University, Center on Education and the Workforce.

<sup>viii</sup> Loftin C, Newman SD, Dumas BP, Gilden G, Bond ML. Perceived barriers to success for minority nursing students: an integrative review. *ISRN Nurs.* 2012;2012:806543. doi: 10.5402/2012/806543. Epub 2012 May 30. PMID: 22701183; PMCID: PMC3369480.

# **SB0718 Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sarah Paul

Position: FAV



**Statement of Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA)**

To the Senate Finance Committee

Chair: Senator Pamela Beidle

February 19, 2024

***Senate Bill 0718: Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program and Advisory Committee – Establishment***

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

*Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and members of the committee, the Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA) is in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 0718: Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program and Advisory Committee – Establishment*

*The current nursing shortage is a multifactorial issue that requires a complex solution. From baby boomer nurses entering retirement, nursing burnout, and poor retention, the demand of nurses is not complementary to the supply of new nurses entering and remaining in the workforce. Hospitals have implemented interventions to combat the shortage, such as hiring travel nurses, increasing patient ratios, and overtime incentives, but none of these interventions are long-term solutions. According to the Maryland Hospital Association’s Maryland Nurse Workforce Projections: 2021-2035, in 2021 the supply of available nurses and licensed practice nurses (LPNs) was 91% and 69% of the demand respectively. By 2035, the percentage of supplied nurses and LPNs will decrease by 80% and 44% respectively based upon predicted hospital utilization (2022). Considering the current impacts on hospital function and patient outcomes, action should be taken now to rectify the issue before the projected conditions become worse in 2035. The Maryland Rural Health Association strongly recommends the establishment of the Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program outlined in SB0718 as it will improve staffing in hospitals while supporting current certified nursing assistants (CNAs) to further their career. Offering financial assistance to pursue this pathway will remove a large barrier that many CNAs (especially in diverse areas) face. Piloting the program in diverse areas will also likely empower the community to pursue a career in healthcare, ultimately contributing to improving the shortage. Whether program participants pursue the LPN or RN licensure, it will help supply the steep demands of nurses and LPNs required to properly staff hospitals. With proper staffing and better working conditions, the turnover for nurses, LPNs, and CNAs will also improve. As a result, patient outcomes will improve, and Maryland will be able deliver the highest quality of care to its residents.*

*On behalf of the Maryland Rural Health Association,  
Jonathan Dayton, MS, NREMT, CNE, Executive Director  
[jdayton@mdruralhealth.org](mailto:jdayton@mdruralhealth.org)*



# **SB 718 Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program and Adv**

Uploaded by: Tammy Bresnahan

Position: FAV



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facebook.com/aarpm

**SB 718 Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program and Advisory Committee  
Senate Finance Committee  
FAVORABLE  
February 20, 2024**

Good afternoon, Chair Beidel and members of the Senate Finance Committee. I am Tammy Bresnahan, Senior Director of Advocacy AARP. On behalf of our more than 850,000 members, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of SB 718 Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program and Advisory Committee. We thank Senators Lam and McKay for sponsoring this important piece of legislation.

AARP is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, nationwide organization that helps people aged 50-Plus and above, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families, such as health care, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities, and protection from financial abuse. Key priorities of our organization include helping all Marylanders achieve financial and health security.

SB 718 establishes the Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program in the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to provide practical and financial support to specified nursing students. The bill also establishes the Maryland Pathway to Nursing Advisory Committee with specified membership to assist the Secretary of Health in the development and implementation of the program. The advisory committee must submit a report on nursing program eligibility for State and federal apprenticeship funding to specified committees.

The program has the following goals:

1. Support certified nursing assistants in licensed practical nursing education programs who intend to practice licensed practical nursing as a career in Maryland or continue to become a RN in the state.
2. Increase the graduation and licensure rates of licensed practical nursing and registered nursing students.
3. Increase the number of licensed practical nurses and registered nurses who reflect the diversity of the communities they serve, and
4. Provide program participants with financial assistance to cover tuition and related fees for licensed practical nursing educational programs, computers, textbooks, and other supplies, and housing, food, and other basic living expenses.

In addition to establishing the pilot, The Secretary of Health must consult with the Maryland Pathway to Nursing Advisory Committee established under the bill in making decisions on how and where to implement the pilot program, and adopting regulations to carry out the program, including participation criteria. The committee must annually report to the Governor and General Assembly in program implementation whether certain licensed practical nursing education programs may be eligible for federal and state funding related to apprenticeship programs, and reports its findings to the Senate Finance Committee and House Health and Government Operations Committee.

AARP believes that this bill helps to strengthen the nursing profession with certified nursing assistants and licensed practical nurses working toward becoming a registered nurses. This will strengthen the nursing workforce. It also helps diversify nursing in the state.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of a qualified and robust health care workforce. The pandemic also exacerbated existing challenges with recruiting, retaining, and training health care workers. The U.S. and Maryland faces shortages of various health care personnel. These shortages are distributed unequally across the country. Most notably, nurse aides, Registered Nurses, Advanced Practice Registered Nurses, are in short supply. The lack of primary care providers is especially problematic because they play a central role in managing care for individuals with chronic conditions. Often an Advanced Practice Nurses step in when there is a lack of primary care providers.

We also believe stepping up recruitment and retention of students from groups that are discriminated against, health professional curricula should increase and improve understanding of, and sensitivity to, cultural and ethnic differences that may affect the health care needs and outcomes of increasingly diverse patient populations.

AARP believes that this bill helps to strengthen the nursing profession with certified nursing assistants and licensed practical nurses working toward becoming a registered nurse. This will strengthen the nursing workforce. It also helps diversify nursing in the state. In addition, we also recommend that the state consider helping to build the pathways of nursing careers to help nurses of color achieve graduate degrees in nursing.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask the Health and Government Operations Committee for a favorable report on SB 718 Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program and Advisory Committee-Establishment.

If you have questions or need follow up, feel free to contact me at [tbresnahan@aarp.org](mailto:tbresnahan@aarp.org) or by calling me at 410-302-8451.

# **LeadingAge Maryland - 2024 - SB 718 - MD Pathways**

Uploaded by: Aaron Greenfield

Position: FWA



576 Johnsville Road  
Sykesville, MD 21784

**TO:** Finance Committee  
**FROM:** LeadingAge Maryland  
**SUBJECT:** Senate Bill 718, Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program and Advisory Committee – Establishment  
**DATE:** February 20, 2024  
**POSITION:** **Favorable with Amendment**

LeadingAge Maryland supports with an amendment on Senate Bill 718, Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program and Advisory Committee – Establishment

LeadingAge Maryland is a community of more than 140 not-for-profit aging services organizations serving residents and clients through continuing care retirement communities, affordable senior housing, assisted living, nursing homes and home and community-based services. Our mission is to expand the world of possibilities for aging in Maryland. We partner with consumers, caregivers, researchers, public agencies, faith communities and others who care about aging in Maryland.

Senate Bill 718 establishes the Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program in the Maryland Department of Health. Before the Secretary of Health implements the program statewide, the Secretary must implement a pilot program at community colleges in at least two geographically diverse areas in the state that offer licensed practical nursing programs. Under the legislation, a Maryland Pathway to Nursing Advisory Committee will be formed to assist the Secretary in the development and implementation of the program.

In light of staffing shortages across the State, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, nursing homes struggle to secure sufficient staff. Maryland offers several levels and types of nursing assistant certification. Certified Nursing Assistant is regarded as an entry-level credential for those who have completed training programs and cleared background checks. This bill seeks to support professional growth for certified nursing assistants.

**Amendment**: Importantly, Senate Bill 718 establishes a Maryland Pathway to Nursing Advisory Committee. LeadingAge Maryland respectfully requests that it is included in this Advisory Committee.

LeadingAge Maryland is invested in ensuring that professionals who are qualified to deliver care in places that most need it, like nursing homes, are allowed growth and a facilitated opportunity to do so.

For these reasons, LeadingAge Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report with amendment on Senate Bill 718.

**For more information, please contact Aaron J. Greenfield, Greenfield Law, LLC,  
410.446.1992**

**SB 718-MDH-LSWA -.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jason Caplan

Position: FWA



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

February 20, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle  
Chair, Senate Finance Committee  
3 East Miller, House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

### **RE: Senate Bill 718 – Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program and Advisory Committee - Establishment – Letter of Support With Amendments**

Dear Chair Beilde and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of support with amendments for Senate Bill (SB) 718 – Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program and Advisory Committee - Establishment.

SB 718 will create the Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program in the Maryland Department of Health and require the Secretary to establish a pilot program at community colleges in at least two geographically diverse areas in the State that offer licensed practical nursing programs before implementing the Program statewide. SB 718 also establishes the Maryland Pathway to Nursing Advisory Committee to assist in the development of the Program.

The MDH Office of Population Health Improvement (OPHI) houses health care workforce and access activities for the MDH that focus on provider recruitment and retention in areas of the state experiencing workforce shortages including the Conrad 30 (J-1 Visa Waiver) Program, Income Tax Credit for Preceptors in Areas with Health Care Workforce Shortages Programs, and the Maryland Loan Repayment Programs. However, OPHI does not have subject matter expertise in this area. Because of that, SB 718 as written will have both fiscal and operational impacts on MDH at an estimated cost ranging from \$356,842 to \$406,334 throughout program implementation. These costs include significant anticipated staffing needs. In light of this, sponsors may want to consider amending this proposal to place this program with a more appropriate agency with relevant expertise. While MDH has expertise in health professions recruitment and retention efforts and health care workforce analysis, other agencies may have the needed expertise in educational training efforts and direct-to-student scholarship and stipend programming.

As acknowledged in both the Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program for Nurses and Nursing Support Staff Workgroup and the Commission to Study the Health Care Workforce Crisis, MDH recognizes the need to correct the discrepancies between Maryland's healthcare needs and the nurse workforce, and the requirement of a multi-pronged approach that equally recruits and



retains healthcare providers to serve in Maryland’s communities. Both recruitment, “attracting current health professionals and students to open positions or to future positions,” and retention, “keeping healthcare professionals employed in their healthcare facilities and communities,” are vital strategies in developing and maintaining a strong workforce. According to a 2022 report released by the Maryland Hospital Association, the shortfall of nurses is expected to double or even triple in the future. The report projects that by 2035, 13,800 additional RNs and 9,200 additional LPNs will be needed.<sup>1</sup>

Developing workforce programming across the educational continuum should focus on keeping costs associated with training pathways affordable. Examples provided by the Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program (MLARP) for Nurses and Nursing Support Staff Workgroup to support students with associated educational costs across the education continuum include offering scholarships for tuition and programming/stipends for supportive services for enrolled students (for example, full-time pay during part-time enrollment, transportation, housing, childcare).

If you have any further questions, please contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director, Office of Governmental Affairs at [sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov](mailto:sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,



Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.  
Secretary

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<sup>1</sup> GlobalData for the Maryland Hospital Association. Maryland Nurse Workforce Projections:2021 – 2035, June 2022: <https://www.mhaonline.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/maryland-nurse-workforce-projections-globaldata.pdf>

# **HFAM Testimony SB 718.pdf**

Uploaded by: Joseph DeMattos

Position: FWA



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE  
SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

February 20, 2024

Senate Bill 718: Maryland Pathway to Nursing Pilot Program and Advisory Committee - Establishment  
*Written Testimony Only*

**POSITION: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENT**

On behalf of the members of the Health Facilities Association of Maryland (HFAM), we appreciate the opportunity to express our support with amendment for Senate Bill 718.

HFAM represents skilled nursing centers and assisted living communities in Maryland, as well as associate businesses that offer products and services to healthcare providers. Our members provide services and employ individuals in nearly every jurisdiction of the state. HFAM is affiliated with the American Health Care Association/National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL), which is the largest association in the United States representing long-term and post-acute care providers.

Senate Bill 718 establishes the Maryland Pathway to Nursing Pilot Program in the Maryland Department of Health; requires the Secretary of Health to report annually to the Governor and the General Assembly on the implementation of the Program through 2029; requires the Secretary to issue grants to at least two pilot sites located in diverse areas on or before July 1, 2025; and establishes the Maryland Pathway to Nursing Advisory Committee to assist the Secretary in the development and implementation of the Program.

**We respectfully request that SB 718 be amended to add the Health Facilities Association of Maryland (HFAM) and LeadingAge Maryland to the Advisory Committee.** We believe that the expertise of leaders from each organization will add value and insight to the Committee. Both organizations, in addition to the organizations already listed in the legislation, represent a diverse membership that should be included when discussing issues related to the nursing workforce.

Healthcare today, especially nursing, faces the greatest shortage and the most tremendous opportunity in workforce development in a generation. To meet this opportunity and succeed, we must deploy new tools and create innovative public-private partnerships.

Workforce recruitment and retention challenges have only grown worse over the last several years. This legislation is important to ensure that we continue to find solutions to staffing challenges and remove barriers to entry for those pursuing a career in nursing to produce more licensed professionals across the continuum.

**For these reasons, and with the proposed amendment, we request a favorable report on SB 718.**

*Submitted by:*

Joseph DeMattos, Jr.  
President and CEO  
(410) 290-5132