



TO: Chair Pena-Melnyk and Members, House Health & Government Operations Committee

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

DATE: February 16, 2024

RE: Testimony – HB757, *State Board of Physicians - Supervised Medical Graduates and Cardiovascular Invasive Specialists*

POSITION: FAVORABLE
February 20, 2024

Please accept these comments in support of **HB757 *State Board of Physicians - Supervised Medical Graduates and Cardiovascular Invasive Specialists***.

Introduction:

University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS) supports House Bill 757, which addresses the critical issue of staffing shortages in Cardiac Catheterization Labs (CCLs) across Maryland. Timely access to care is paramount, particularly in emergency situations such as heart attacks, where every moment counts. This bill aims to repeal the termination of certain provisions of law related to the delegation of duties by licensed physicians to registered cardiovascular invasive specialists (RCIS), ensuring that CCLs are adequately staffed with trained personnel at all times.

Background:

In recent years, Maryland, like many other states, has faced challenges in recruiting and retaining Radiologic Technologists (RTs) for CCL positions. This shortage has been exacerbated by the allure of higher-paying positions in standalone vascular clinics and other industries. To address this gap, RCISs have been enlisted to assist cardiologists with fluoroscopy during coronary angiography procedures. RCIS possess specialized training in assisting with cardiac catheterization procedures, making them valuable assets in filling the void left by RT vacancies.

Previous Legislation and MHCC Study:

Five years ago, recognizing the urgency of the situation, the General Assembly passed legislation that provided for an exception allowing RCIS to assist with fluoroscopy in Maryland hospital-based CCLs. This exception was a crucial step in allowing RCIS to practice at the top of their training and ensure timely care for patients. A recent study conducted by the Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) found that RCIS have been utilized in 21 hospital-based CCLs from FY 2020 to 2023 without any reported radiation injuries or civil penalties. Furthermore, the study highlighted a significant increase in the RT vacancy rate, underscoring the continued need for RCIS to address staffing shortages in CCLs.

Recommendation:

UMMS strongly supports HB 757 as it plays a vital role in ensuring the efficient operation of CCLs across Maryland. Prior to the legislation allowing RCIS to assist with fluoroscopy, physicians were burdened with performing these duties in the absence of RTs. The expansion of the RCIS role has proven to be integral to CCL workflows, allowing physicians to focus on critical tasks while ensuring uninterrupted patient care. As staffing challenges persist in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the renewal of this legislation is essential to prevent disruptions in CCL workflows and safeguard patient outcomes.

UMMS appreciates the opportunity to provide comments for the Committee's consideration and urges a **FAVORABLE** report on HB757.