



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

April 2, 2024

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Senate Bill 718 – Maryland Pathway to Nursing Pilot Program and Advisory Committee - Establishment – Letter of Support As Amended

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) respectfully submits this letter of support as amended for Senate Bill 718 – Maryland Pathway to Nursing Pilot Program and Advisory Committee - Establishment.

Senate Bill (SB) 718 establishes the Maryland Pathway to Nursing Pilot Program in the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) and creates the Maryland Pathway to Nursing Advisory Committee to assist the Secretary of Higher Education in the development and implementation of the Pilot Program. SB 718 also requires the Secretary to issue grants to at least two pilot sites located in diverse areas of the State and report annually to the Governor and the General Assembly on the implementation of the Program through 2029.

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. MDH also recognizes the affordability related to developing workforce programming across the education continuum with focus on keeping costs associated with training pathways affordable.

The Maryland Higher Education Commission’s long-standing work in supporting higher education opportunities, and familiarity with the state’s higher education landscape and resources available, is better equipped to execute the mandates of this legislation. MDH appreciates the work of the sponsor and is supportive of SB 718 as amended.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Laura Scott".

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