



**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