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Sykesville, MD 21784

TO: Health and Government Operations Committee
FROM: LeadingAge Maryland
SUBJECT: House Bill 354, Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program and Advisory Committee – Establishment
DATE: February 6, 2024
POSITION: **Favorable with Amendment**

LeadingAge Maryland supports with an amendment on House Bill 354, 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.

House Bill 354 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, House Bill 354 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 House Bill 354.

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