



**Committee:** House Ways and Means Committee

**Bill Number:** House Bill 1317 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Use of Reimbursement Funds by Schools

**Hearing Date:** February 28, 2024

**Position:** Support with Amendment

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The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) supports *House Bill 1317 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Use or Reimbursement Funds by Schools*. The bill’s underlying intention is to ensure schools direct new resources from Medicaid billing for school health services to address the shortage of school health providers.

MNA has been deeply concerned about the shortage of school nurses and other school health professionals. On average statewide, there is only one nurse per 848 students (see attached). States have been struggling to identify additional resources to bolster their school health workforce. In 2023, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services opened the door to a potentially game changing opportunity. Under new federal guidance, schools can draw down more federal matching funds for school health services.<sup>i</sup> Even before this new guidance, some states had developed innovative pathways for reimbursement for school nursing services.<sup>ii</sup>

We would request two amendments which we believe align with the intent of the bill:

Amendment 1: Clarifying which practitioners may be reimbursed. Federal law and regulations already delineate who may bill for school health services. The practitioner must be authorized to practice either by a health occupation board or education agency. We recommend aligning the bill’s language to reflect federal guidance:

On page 1 in lines 21-23:

(2) "PROVIDER" MEANS A ~~SCHOOL AUDIOLOGIST, SCHOOL~~  
~~PSYCHOLOGIST, SCHOOL SPEECH PATHOLOGIST, AND ANY OTHER HEALTH CARE~~  
~~PRACTITIONER WHO PROVIDES SERVICES TO A STUDENT IN A SCHOOL SETTING.~~  
PRACTITIONER WHO IS AUTHORIZED TO PRACTICE IN A SCHOOL SETTING UNDER THE  
HEALTH OCCUPATIONS ARTICLE OR EDUCATION ARTICLE INCLUDING

- (i) nurses;
- (ii) licensed clinical social workers;
- (iii) professional counselors;
- (iv) marriage and family therapists;
- (v) occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants;
- (vi) speech language pathologists;
- (vii) physical therapists;
- (viii) school counselors; and
- (ix) school psychologists.

Amendment 2: Clarifying how funding may be spent. As we understand the bill's intention, new resources from Medicaid billing for school health must be directed towards the school health workforce. We would recommend a change in language to recognize that school health professionals are paid through salaries rather than stipend arrangements as well as that educational opportunities are not typically labeled as internships:

*On page 2 in lines 8-15*

- (1) *ADDITIONAL POSITIONS FOR PROVIDERS;*
- (2) ~~PAID INTERNSHIPS FOR STUDENTS SEEKING TO BECOME PROVIDERS;~~ EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS IN ACCREDITED HEALTH PROFESSIONAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS TO WORK UNDER A PROVIDER AS PERMITTED UNDER THE HEALTH OCCUPATIONS ARTICLE OR THE EDUCATION ARTICLE;
- (3) ~~STIPENDS~~ SALARY INITIATIVES FOR PROVIDERS THAT ARE DESIGNED TO ADDRESS PROBLEMS IN PROVIDER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION; AND
- (4) ~~STIPENDS~~ SALARY INITIATIVES FOR PROVIDERS WORKING IN LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS THAT ARE DESIGNED TO ADDRESS PROBLEMS IN PROVIDER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION.

We urge a favorable report on this bill with our proposed clarifying amendments. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net) or (443) 926-3443.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/delivering-service-school-based-settings-comprehensive-guide-medicaid-services-and-administrative>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.networkforphl.org/resources/medicaid-reimbursement-for-school-nursing-services-2/>