

House Bill 905- Hospitals - Clinical Staffing Committees and Plans - Establishment

Position: *Oppose*

April 1, 2025

Senate Finance Committee

On behalf of Northwest Hospital, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in opposition of House Bill 905.

Northwest Hospital has well-established processes for determining appropriate staffing levels. We incorporate staff self-scheduling and utilize float pool, agency and structured bonuses to ensure safe staffing. These processes are informed by The Joint Commission and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. These organizations establish requirements and national guidelines which prioritize patient safety and positive clinical outcomes.

Northwest Hospital recognizes the importance of engaging our frontline team members in making staffing decisions. We have a robust shared governance model that is driven by our staff to make decisions. Our shift huddles, safety huddles, staff meetings, town halls and significant leader presence and daily rounding are excellent venues for staff to voice their concerns and recommendations. This collaborative approach ensures that those directly involved in patient care have a voice in determining appropriate staffing levels.

Hospital staffing plans are reviewed and updated several times a day to account for fluctuating patient volumes, bed availability, individual patient acuity, and the availability and experience of clinical staff. Hospitals need real-time flexibility to respond to and accommodate complex, evolving circumstances. A single, centralized staffing committee lacks the dexterity needed to respond in real time to volume changes and care demands.

Additionally, clinical staffing plans must be developed by clinical team members. These decisions require specific knowledge and expertise to ensure patient safety. While we fully support engaging front line staff in these decisions, clinical staffing should be guided by clinical personnel while non-clinical staff can inform non-clinical staffing.

Northwest Hospital is deeply committed to supporting our workforce and to collaborating on solutions that strengthen our workforce and advance health care in Maryland. We are concerned that HB 905 fails to reflect the complexities of hospital staffing and does not address the root cause of workforce shortages.

For these reasons, we request an *unfavorable* report on HB 905.

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Northwest Hospital Center

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