

Maryland Association of Nurse Anesthetists

SB 216 – Health Occupations – Nursing – Loan Repayment, Education, and Sunset
Extension (Building Opportunities for Nurses Act of 2025)

Before The Senate Finance Committee

Position: Favorable with Amendments

January 28, 2025

Madam Chair and members of the HGO Committee, the Maryland Association of Nurse Anesthetists (MANA) is in strong support of SB 216, which addresses the nursing shortage in Maryland through loan repayment programs, licensure by endorsement, and program extension of the continued supervision of the Board of Nursing. We do, however, respectfully request one amendment to modify the number of hours required to the nurse preceptor tax credit from 100 to 90 hours.

- **Nursing Shortage Data:** A 2022 report by the Maryland Hospital Association estimates a shortage of 5,000 full-time registered nurses and 4,000 licensed practical nurses in Maryland, with the potential for these shortages to double or triple by 2035 without intervention.
- **Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program:** The Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program (MLARP) assists in repaying education loans for nurses in eligible fields, offering up to \$100,000 for advanced practice nurses and up to \$50,000 for RNs and LPNs for full-time service agreements. SB 216 expands MLARP eligibility to include both non-profit and for-profit organizations in areas with healthcare workforce shortages and provides additional loan repayment assistance for nurses in shortage specialties. It is critical to extend and expand this program.
- **Licensure by Endorsement:** SB 216 allows for licensure by endorsement for nurses who have completed substantially equivalent education programs in other states or countries, expediting the licensure process. We strongly support this provision.
- **Maryland Program Evaluation Act Extension:** SB 216 extends the Maryland Program Evaluation Act from 2025 to 2030, continuing oversight and partnership to improve the Maryland Board of Nursing's processes and customer service. We strongly support the continued collaboration between the parties. While several issues have been resolved there is much more to accomplish.

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- **Preceptor Tax Credits Extension:** SB 216 extends the termination dates for preceptorship program tax credits from June 30, 2026, to June 30, 2030, and suggests reducing required clinical rotation hours to increase eligibility.
 - **Proposed Amendment:** The proposed amendment to the Tax-General Article reduces the required clinical rotation hours from 100 to 90 to increase eligibility for the preceptor tax credit.

Should you have any questions please contact our legislative counsel, Bill Kress.

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