



MARYLAND CITIZENS' HEALTH INITIATIVE

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 1571

BEFORE THE HOUSE HEALTH AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

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Madam Chair and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 1571. The Maryland Citizens Health Initiative is committed to ensuring that all Marylanders have access to quality, affordable health care. A critical piece to achieving that goal is a skilled and able health care workforce. As health care delivery systems change, Maryland faces staffing shortages in non-hospital settings, while hospital-based employment has waned. This not only diminishes the quality of existing health care services, but also leaves dedicated, entry-level health care workers without a job or the training necessary to adjust to shifting employment opportunities.

HB 1571 remedies this issue by ensuring investments in the existing Hospital Employees Retraining Program are put towards retraining hospital workers before they lose their current job. Currently, the fund is underused, meaning employees do not receive the retraining they have a right to, and hospital closings can threaten the livelihood and stability of these employees. HB 1571 will strengthen Maryland's health care workforce, assist workers in career advancement, and ultimately ensure that we provide Maryland patients with quality care.

We thank Delegate Peña-Melnyk for introducing this important legislation and urge a favorable report by the committee.