



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE  
HOUSE ECONOMIC MATTERS COMMITTEE**

February 17, 2021

House Bill 653: Joint Committee on Workforce Development

*Written Testimony Only*

**POSITION: FAVORABLE**

On behalf of the members of the Health Facilities Association of Maryland (HFAM), we appreciate the opportunity to express our support for House Bill 653. HFAM represents over 170 skilled nursing centers and assisted living communities in Maryland, as well as nearly 80 associate businesses that offer products and services to healthcare providers. Our members provide services and employ individuals in nearly every jurisdiction in the state.

HFAM members provide the majority of post-acute and long-term care to Marylanders in need: 6 million days of care across all payer sources annually, including more than 4 million Medicaid days of care and one million Medicare days of care. Thousands of Marylanders across the state depend on the high-quality services that our skilled nursing and rehabilitation centers offer every day.

The level of commitment and service provided in skilled nursing and rehabilitation centers depends on round-the-clock efforts of the caring, compassionate, dedicated and well-trained professionals for whom service to elders is a core mission. The Maryland long-term and post-acute care workforce, made up of approximately 30,000 individuals from dietary staff and housekeepers to nursing staff and physicians, saves lives and contributes to the well-being of the residents under their care.

Healthcare is a people-helping-people enterprise and there is no substitute for the personal touch and smile of a well-trained caregiver. Additionally, healthcare offers tremendous opportunities for trained workers, right out of school and through college, with many career-advancing opportunities.

Like all healthcare organizations, we are very concerned about meeting workforce needs both now and going forward. Workforce development, recruitment, and retention of both direct and indirect workers across all healthcare settings has always been important. For years, in Maryland and across the nation, healthcare settings have faced staffing shortages in a range of roles. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges, which makes the need to address workforce issues even more critical.

We often find ourselves focused on public policy problems or most recently enormous healthcare and economic challenges brought on by the ongoing pandemic. This bill reminds us of the opportunity we share to train workers for a rewarding profession and the earning that comes with it, and to lay the groundwork for that individual to build upon their skill set and advance their career.

**For these reasons, we support House Bill 653: Joint Committee on Workforce Development.**

*Submitted by:*

Joseph DeMattos, Jr.

President and CEO

410-290-5132