



Committee: Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Bill Number: Senate Bill 716 – Maryland Health Care Workers Loan Assistance Program – Establishment and Funding

Hearing Date: March 10, 2022

Position: Support

The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) supports *Senate Bill 716 – Maryland Health Care Workers Loan Assistance Program – Establishment and Funding*. This bill establishes the Maryland Health Care Workers Loan Assistance Program. This Program will support health care workers by providing a repayment of up to \$10,000 for a health care related education loan.

The Maryland Nurses Association serves as the voice of nurses and advocates for excellence in nursing and the highest quality healthcare for all. Over the past two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has solidified the importance and need for nurses in health care. Unfortunately, due to burnout, exhaustion, financial burdens, and high-risk situations, retaining nurses has posed to be incredibly difficult.

In order to continue providing health care to Marylanders, it is important to remove financial barriers for people to attend nursing school. Currently, there are approximately 86,694 nurses in Maryland.ⁱ Of these nurses, 28% have an associates degree in nursing, 48% have a bachelors degree in nursing, 15% have a master’s degree nursing and about 2% have a doctoral degree in nursing.ⁱⁱ The median loan debt for just a Bachelors nursing degree is \$20,000 to \$40,000ⁱⁱⁱ and for advanced practice nurses, such as nurse practitioners, nurse midwives, clinician nurse specialists and certified nurse anesthetists, debt can be as high as \$55,000.^{iv}

The Maryland Nurses Association has heard and recognized that many students consider financial debt when choosing their career path. This has been a particular concern following the pandemic where nurses have been understaffed and faced a great deal of stress. This legislation, by providing financial assistance, can encourage our students to enter and continue their education in the nursing field. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB 716. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

ⁱ <https://www.journalofnursingregulation.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2155-8256%2821%2900027-2>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.journalofnursingregulation.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2155-8256%2821%2900027-2>

ⁱⁱⁱ [Layout 1 \(ajj.com\)](#)

^{iv} https://www.aacnursing.org/Portals/42/Policy/PDF/Debt_Report.pdf