



Board of Nursing

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Secretary

March 10, 2022

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Senate Budget and Taxation Operations
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: SB 716 – Maryland Health Care Workers Loan Assistance Program – Establishment and Funding – Letter of Support with Amendments

Dear Chair Guzzone and Committee Members:

The Maryland Board of Nursing (the Board) respectfully submits this letter of support with amendments for Senate Bill (SB) 716 – Maryland Health Care Workers Loan Assistance Program – Establishment and Funding. This bill establishes the Maryland Health Care Workers Loan Assistance Program and Fund to provide assistance to health care workers in repaying health care – related education loans and requires the interest earnings of the Fund to be credited to the Fund.

The Board sincerely appreciates the Maryland General Assembly’s diligence in addressing the health care workforce shortage by focusing on efforts in recruitment and retention of frontline staff. The costs related to attending an education program, and the subsequent loan repayment process, can often deter and prevent individuals from entering the health care field or pursuing higher education. The Board strongly supports providing a secure funding source for health care workers to receive assistance in repaying health care – related education loans. It is imperative to not only attract individuals to the field but also offer current practitioners assistance with paying expensive and often burdensome education loans.

The Board respectfully submits the following amendment to clarify section §8–101 of the Health Occupations Article. The Board is mandated to regulate four (4) advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) designations, which include nurse practitioners, nurse anesthetists, nurse midwives, and clinical nurse specialists. SB 716, as written, does not include two (2) of the four (4) APRN titles. The Board believes that removing the specific categories of nurse anesthetist and registered nurse practitioner from the definition of a health care worker will lessen confusion and will also provide all APRN titles an opportunity to receive loan assistance from the Fund.

Amendment

On page 2. Lines 16 – 19. Remove:

[(2) A NURSE ANESTHETIST, AS DEFINED IN § 8-101 OF THE HEALTH OCCUPATIONS ARTICLE;

[(3) A REGISTERED NURSE PRACTITIONER, AS DEFINED IN § 8-101 OF THE HEALTH OCCUPATIONS ARTICLE;]

For the reasons discussed above, the Maryland Board of Nursing respectfully submits this letter of support with amendments for SB 716.

I hope this information is useful. For more information, please contact Iman Farid, Health Policy Analyst, at (410) 585 – 1536 or iman.farid@maryland.gov or Rhonda Scott, Deputy Director, at (410) 585 – 1953 or rhonda.scott2@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,



Gary N. Hicks
Board President

The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.