



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

February 22, 2022

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky  
Chair, Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: SB 696 – Maryland Loan Repayment Program for Nurses and Nursing Workers – Program Establishment and Funding – Letter of Information**

Dear Chair Pinsky and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) is submitting this letter of information for Senate Bill (SB) 696 - Maryland Loan Repayment Program for Nurses and Nursing Workers - Program Establishment and Funding.

SB 696 establishes the Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program (MLARP) Fund for Nurses and Nursing Workers to assist certain nurses and nursing workers with the repayment of certain education loans, requires the Comptroller to distribute \$400,000 from fees collected by the State Board of Nursing for certain program grants, and creates a workgroup to examine the implementation of the MLARP for nurses and nursing workers and make recommendations to increase the nursing workforce in the state.

While MDH recognizes the extreme staffing shortage of nurses and related professions within the state and appreciates the intent of the workgroup created by SB 696, it should be noted there are several other bills aimed at studying the same thing. Specifically, SB 626 (Maryland Loan Repayment Program for Physicians and Physician Assistant-Alteration), SB 440 (Commission to Study the Health Care Workforce Crisis in Maryland–Establishment), and HB 97 (Workgroup on Black, Latino, Asian American Pacific Islander, and Other Underrepresented Behavioral Health Professionals) all create workgroups to study various aspects of the healthcare workforce shortage in the state. It would likely be more efficient to combine the various healthcare workforce shortage studies into one singular workgroup.

Additionally, as SB 696 creates a new program within MDH and requires MDH to staff the workgroup, there will be operational and fiscal impacts totaling approximately \$1.3 million over five years.

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact Heather Shek, Director, Office of Governmental Affairs at (443) 695-4218 or [heather.shek@maryland.gov](mailto:heather.shek@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dennis R. Schrader".

Dennis R. Schrader  
Secretary