



Board of Nursing

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

March 8, 2022

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Chair, Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: SB 856 – Public Schools – Health Services – School Nurses – Letter of Support

Dear Chair Pinsky and Committee Members:

The Maryland Board of Nursing (the Board) respectfully submits this letter of support for Senate Bill (SB) 856 – Public Schools – Health Services – School Nurses. This bill requires each county board of education to provide a certain nurse at each public school.

The Board strongly supports requiring each county board of education, with the assistance of the county health department, to provide a full time registered nurse (RN) in each public school. The school nurse provides the expertise to identify, assess, plan, implement, and evaluate the health needs of the school community. There are, however, significant barriers to providing this service as the current school health landscape cannot provide a dedicated RN for each school setting. Instead, nurses travel among schools within a district or county.¹ This barrier has been further exacerbated due to the COVID-19 pandemic and nursing workforce shortage. The Board believes it is imperative to station a full time RN in each school, not only for the health and safety of the students, but also for the supervision of other health personnel.

The school nurse works in conjunction with other personnel in the school health setting, including licensed practical nurses (LPN), certified nursing assistants – school health (CNA – SH), and certified medication technicians (CMT). A school nurse must supervise and be readily available when these individuals perform delegated tasks; provide first aid; give emergency care and medications; and assist in monitoring student health status. The absence of a school nurse not only substantially limits the amount of care other school health personnel can provide, but also tremendously disrupts the continuity of treatment for students.

For the reasons discussed above, the Maryland Board of Nursing respectfully submits this letter of support for SB 856.

¹ School Health Nurse Staffing. Montgomery County Commission on Health. Nov 2019.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Hicks", written in a cursive style.

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.