



Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Bill Number: SB 696 - Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment for Nurses and Nursing Workers – Program Establishment and Funding

Hearing Date: February 22, 2022

Position: Letter of Information

The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) would like to offer this letter of information on *Senate Bill 696 – Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment for Nurses and Nursing Workers – Program Establishment and Funding*. We are enormously appreciative of legislators’ support of nursing. We wanted to offer some questions for consideration as the Committee is reviewing the bill:

- **Which nursing staff are intended to be eligible:** We are not clear on which types of nurses and nursing support staff would be eligible for the loan repayment program. The bill specifies that nurses and nursing support staff in primary care would qualify. However, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and nursing support staff are seldom categorized as “primary care” providers. The term primary care is associated with physicians, physician assistants, and some advanced practice registered nurses. Nurses and certified nursing assistants who work in acute care, for example, probably would not qualify for this program.
- **Is the funding source appropriate:** As we reviewed the bill, it appears that the funding may come from licensure fees. This funding mechanism may make sense for practitioners, such as physicians, that have higher incomes. However, the majority of nurses are salaried, and nursing support staff have more limited incomes.

If we can provide any further support as you consider SB 686, please let us know, and we would be happy to support your efforts. We may be reached through Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.