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TO: The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Members, Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
The Honorable Ariana B. Kelly

FROM: Danna L. Kauffman
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer

DATE: March 26, 2022

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 218 – *Health Occupations – Nursing – Dialysis Technicians*

DaVita, Fresenius Medical Care, Independent Dialysis Foundation, and U.S. Renal Care, the leading providers of kidney care in Maryland, support House Bill 218. Simply stated, House Bill 218 removes the requirement that an individual be certified as a nursing assistant in order to receive certification as a dialysis technician (DT). Under the bill, to be a DT, an individual would still be required to complete a dialysis training program that is approved by the Maryland Board of Nursing (MBON) **AND** receive a national certification either through:

- Certified Clinical Hemodialysis Technician by the Nephrology Nursing Certification Commission; or
- Clinical Nephrology Technician by the National Nephrology Certification Organization; or
- Certified Hemodialysis Technician by the Board of Nephrology Examiners Nursing Technology.

As illustrated in the attached chart, Maryland is the only state that requires an individual to be a certified as a nursing assistant in order to work as a DT. The work performed by DTs is very different in scope than that often performed by a certified nursing assistant (CNA). For example, CNAs perform such tasks as assisting with oral hygiene; performing range of motion; measuring and recording urinary output; providing perineal care and catheter care; making an occupied bed; providing foot care and fingernail care; assisting in feeding and positioning; providing baths; and assisting with daily hygiene tasks.

Given that dialysis is performed in chronic, ambulatory settings, the tasks typically performed by CNAs are not being performed nor needed to be performed by DTs. Rather, DTs are trained to perform the following:

- Initiation of treatment
- Proper cannulation techniques of accesses

- Monitoring patients during treatment
- Termination of dialysis
- Identifying and addressing possible complications of dialysis
- Water treatment and dialysate preparation
- Operation of kidney dialysis equipment and machines.

As you know, Maryland is facing a significant health care worker shortage. Dialysis centers are equally affected and are competing with hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living, and other entities to hire CNAs. Dialysis centers then have the added requirement to train them DTs. It is important to note that dialysis centers are eligible to be approved by the MBON to teach the CNA DT Program. Unfortunately, MBON's approval process, both for the course and the instructors, is time-consuming and often creates additional angst in the hiring process. Consequently, the need to obtain both the CNA classification and the DT classification is proving to have a detrimental effect on the ability to staff dialysis centers, which creates service issues for ensuring that this life-saving service remains available to those in need. Equally important is the fact that there is no evidence available to demonstrate that Maryland patients receive a higher quality of care in Maryland than received in other states by this added requirement.

Therefore, we urge a favorable vote on House Bill 218.

For more information call:

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