



NOTRE DAME  
OF MARYLAND  
UNIVERSITY

**Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee**  
***SB626 – Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program for Physicians***  
***and Physician Assistants – Alterations***  
***February 17, 2022***  
**Favorable**

On behalf of Notre Dame of Maryland University (NDMU), thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support** of [SB 626 – Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program for Physicians and Physician Assistants – Alterations](#). The bill expands the Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program for Physicians and Physician Assistants ([MLARP](#)) to include part-time physicians and physician assistants. NDMU is developing a Master of Science in Physician Assistant and is pursuing ARC-PA accreditation.

The State of Maryland is currently experiencing a workforce shortage of primary care providers, including physician assistants (PAs). According to the Maryland Department of Labor, the demand for physician assistants will increase 40% from 3,126 in 2018 to 4,362 in 2028. Nationally, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a workforce demand increase of 31% from 2019 to 2029.

NDMU believes that by including part-time employed physicians and PAs in the MLARP program, patients will be the primary benefactors. Across the industry, there is an ever-increasing population of PAs and physicians who intentionally seek part-time work. The bill if enacted would have the likely effect of incentivizing part-time primary care and specialty care practitioners to locate in health professional shortage areas and medically underserved areas. Studies have shown care from a part-time primary care practitioner results in patient satisfaction being maintained or improved.<sup>12</sup> This incentive could serve an important State goal of expanding access to essential healthcare services for those most in need. Loan assistance repayment programs also serve as an important retention tool for high quality physicians and PAs in the State of Maryland.

In addition to providing direct benefits for in-need patients and practitioners, loan assistance repayment programs more broadly expand access for students to enter into in-demand professions that require extensive graduate level education. NDMU and other higher education institutions highlight such programs for prospective students as a potential means to help finance their education. Eliminating loan debt for full-time and part-time physicians and PAs may also incentivize practitioners to give-back more of their time and expertise to formally educating their

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<sup>1</sup> Panattoni, Stone, A., Chung, S., & Tai-Seale, M. (2014). Patients Report Better Satisfaction with Part-Time Primary Care Physicians, Despite Less Continuity of Care and Access. *Journal of General Internal Medicine : JGIM*, 30(3), 327–333. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-014-3104-6>.

<sup>2</sup> Bodenheimer, Haq, C., & Lehmann, W. (2018). Continuity and Access in the Era of Part-Time Practice. *Annals of Family Medicine*, 16(4), 359–. <https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.2267>

future peers. NDMU believes that enfranchising physicians and PAs who are or will be employed part-time in the tuition repayment assistance program, as put forward in SB 626, will foster good will and deliver a financial incentive to the healthcare providers who staff the front lines of healthcare delivery in the State of Maryland.

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