



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**  
Senate Bill 82: Certified Nursing Assistants – Licensing Requirements  
February 1, 2022  
*Written Testimony Only*

**POSITION: Unfavorable**

On behalf of the members of the Health Facilities Association of Maryland (HFAM), we appreciate the opportunity to offer this testimony and background regarding Senate Bill 82. HFAM represents over 170 skilled nursing centers and assisted living communities in Maryland, as well as nearly 80 associate businesses that offer products and services to healthcare providers. Our skilled nursing members provide the majority of long-term and post-acute care to Marylanders in need.

Senate Bill 82 would require certified nursing assistants (CNAs) to meet the same requirements as geriatric nursing assistants (GNAs). This legislation would increase requirements for current CNAs and HFAM is concerned that this could potentially worsen the ongoing workforce shortage by prohibiting those currently licensed as CNAs from working.

We sincerely commend the sponsor for bringing this legislation forward. However, due to the current workforce shortage, we believe this measure would be counterproductive at this time. Across healthcare settings in Maryland and throughout the country, we are fighting this most recent surge of the COVID-19 pandemic with fewer people working in healthcare, and particularly fewer people working in skilled nursing and rehabilitation centers.

Workforce recruitment and retention was a challenge before the pandemic and it has only grown more challenging over the last two years. Tens of thousands of healthcare workers in Maryland have left the field since the start of the pandemic. Licensed healthcare professionals are scarce and all healthcare settings are competing for employees from the same labor pool.

There are two critical points that must also be considered. First, the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and the Maryland Board of Nursing (MBON) are continuing to rebuild following the cyberattack that occurred in December 2021. Relative to this proposed legislation, there has been a significant backlog in MBON's ability to process new and renewal licensure applications. Second, there has been a shortage of GNA testing capacity since before the pandemic. MBON has recently changed its testing vendor from Pearson Vue to Credentia and we applaud this change. I personally and professionally have high confidence in MBON Executive Director Karen Evans and her team – they have been engaged and thoughtful partners.

While we oppose Senate Bill 82 at this time due to the current workforce shortage and other noted factors, we do believe that this issue should be revisited in the future, perhaps in 2024 when we hopefully have addressed the workforce shortage and other policies and public-private partnerships have taken hold.

**For these reasons, we respectfully request an unfavorable report for Senate Bill 82.**

*Submitted by:*  
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