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Operations Committee

Subcommittees

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and Long Term Care

Insurance and Pharmaceuticals

House Chair, Joint Committee on
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 218 - Health Occupations - Nursing - Dialysis Technicians

Senate Education, Health and Environment Committee

March 24, 2022

Thank you Chair Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan and Members of the Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to present HB 218 which is a minor change to Maryland health occupations statutes that will help to ease the workforce shortage faced by dialysis centers operating in the state. This legislation passed HGO and the House floor unanimously.

During discussions with various health care organizations to determine how to address the critical workforce shortages that are currently affecting care delivery, I became aware of the challenges faced by dialysis centers to hire individuals and then train them to be both CNAs and dialysis technicians. I also learned that **Maryland is the only state that requires dialysis technicians to be certified nursing assistants.**

In light of the statewide shortage of CNA's, House Bill 218 removes the requirement that dialysis technicians must be certified as a nursing assistant. This bill aligns Maryland with other states and maintains the requirement that, in order to practice as a dialysis technician, individuals will need to complete an approved dialysis training program and receive national certification.

Given the limited scope of duties performed by dialysis technicians, removing this dual certification will not impact the quality of care and will, in fact, strengthen quality by increasing the labor pool and providing an additional avenue for individuals to enter the healthcare workforce. **The Maryland Kidney Commission agrees and is in support of this legislation.**

When considered by HGO, AFSCME requested a clarification that the Dialysis Technician certification be maintained for state hospital facilities due to the critical care job responsibilities and need for cross-training for individuals employed in these facilities. **The amendment adopted by the House addresses the concerns of AFSCME and includes technical changes requested by the Board of Nursing.**

The HGO Committee determined the estimated costs in the fiscal note we received were inaccurate. Specifically, according to the Board of Nursing:

- 1) The Board of Nursing already has a process and software in place to approve this certification, therefore, there will only be a minimal need for software adjustments, which they estimated to be about \$50,000.
- 2) Further, in discussions with the Board of Nursing, it was determined that the number of new potential applicants in the fiscal note is vastly overestimated. The number of potential applicants utilized in the fiscal note reflects the number of applicants the Board has rejected over a course of many years. There are only around 1600 dialysis technicians licensed by the Board today who work in dialysis centers and this number will not increase significantly if this bill passes.

Removing the CNA requirement will make it easier for Dialysis centers to find and hire technicians when necessary due to normal turnover in the industry. Please note that HFAM submitted opposition testimony in the House by mistake and this testimony was subsequently withdrawn. **HFAM supports this legislation.** The bill was reported favorable in a unanimous vote by the Health and Government Operations Committee and by a vote of 134-0 on the House floor.

We face an unprecedented demand for workers across all sectors of healthcare. This bill takes a small but important step that will help dialysis centers boost their workforce and safely provide the same high quality life-saving services our constituents need.

Thank you and I urge a favorable report.