



Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Secretary

March 29, 2022

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: House Bill 1208 – Health Occupations – Health Care Workforce Expansion – Letter of Information

Dear Chair Guzzone and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of information for House Bill (HB) 1208 - Health Occupations-Health Care Workforce Expansion. HB 1208 establishes the Licensed Practical Nurse and Registered Nurse Preceptorship Tax Credit Fund for registered nurses (RN), licensed practical nurses (LPN), and advanced practice registered nurses (APRN). As amended, HB 1208 expands nurse professionals who are eligible to claim a tax credit to include any advanced practice registered nurse, not just nurse practitioners.

HB 1208 also requires MDH, in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Labor, to convene a Stakeholder Workgroup to examine the expansion of the state apprenticeship programs. As amended, HB 1208 adds a second Stakeholder Workgroup to examine how the state can implement a loan repayment assistance program for nurses and other health practitioners to further incentivize the health practitioners to practice in professional shortage areas and medically underserved areas.

MDH also notes that in addition to the Stakeholder Workgroups established in HB 1208, there are several other proposed bills that establish workgroups to study similar aspects of the healthcare workforce issues. These bills are:

1. SB 440/HB 625 - Commission to Study the Health Care Workforce Crisis in Maryland – Establishment
2. HB 97 - Workgroup on Black, Latino, Asian American Pacific Islander, and Other Underrepresented Behavioral Health Professionals
3. SB 626/HB 1464 - Maryland Loan Repayment Program for Physicians and Physician Assistant-Alteration
4. SB 696/HB 975 - Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment for Nurses and Nursing Workers – Program Establishment and Funding.

MDH recognizes the value of workgroups to research challenges and provide recommendations. However, there will be duplicative work happening between these workgroups. It would likely be more efficient to combine the various healthcare workforce shortage studies into one singular workgroup which will reduce duplication and allow for a broader stakeholder engagement. For instance, SB 696/HB 975 creates a workgroup very similar to the one proposed in HB 1208 on examining ways to incentivize practitioners to practice in professional shortage areas. It includes an overlap of workgroup members, health professions to be studied, and research. If both workgroups remain in these bills, there will be unnecessary duplication of efforts.

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact Heather Shek, Director, Office of Governmental Affairs at 410-767-5282 or heather.shek@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dennis R. Schrader". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

Dennis R. Schrader
Secretary