

**SB407**

**Favorable**

TO: The Honorable Delores Kelley, Chair  
Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Elizabeth Hafey  
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Johns Hopkins University and Medicine

DATE: February 9, 2022

Johns Hopkins supports **Senate Bill 407 – Health Occupations – Health Care Staffing Shortage Emergency Declaration and Licensing and Practice Requirements (Health Care Heroes Act of 2022)**. This bill will authorize the Secretary of Health to declare a health care staffing shortage emergency, in certain circumstances. That declaration would trigger certain flexibilities and waivers that Johns Hopkins has taken advantage of during the public health emergency. Johns Hopkins is supportive of efforts that expand access of care to its patients and make permanent the flexibilities that hospitals enjoyed during the declaration of the catastrophic health emergency. Moreover, the flexibilities have created greater opportunities to expand the ability to serve our patients.

Johns Hopkins Medicine provides both specialty and primary care services at four hospitals, Johns Hopkins Community Physician (JHCP) practices, and ambulatory surgery centers (ASC) across Maryland. The pandemic has significantly strained and overwhelmed our health care system and our health care providers. Since the start of the pandemic, Johns Hopkins has vaccinated over 29,300 members within the community through mobile vaccinations, and tested over 5,000 residents of community centers tested in the community. Our staff and health care workers have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic every day, while ensuring we continue to provide excellent care to our patients. But there continues to be uncertainty around this pandemic. We encourage the legislature to recognize the unique challenges that our hospitals have faced and will continue to face as we address COVID-19.

Johns Hopkins continues to experience workforce challenges. This legislation, while not a panacea, provides some permanent solutions to help mitigate these shortages. The staffing shortage we have experienced the most acutely has been in nursing. There is a specific recognition in this bill that will allow for nursing graduates to work as registered nurses. The waivers during the emergency also provided us with greater flexibility in recruiting registered nurses. Granting the Secretary of the Department of Health the ability to declare a staffing shortage emergency, in certain circumstances, creates another avenue to provide Johns Hopkins with more flexibility needed to mitigate disruptions to health care services across all of our facilities and to address acute staffing challenges.

For the above reasons, Johns Hopkins recommends a favorable report on **Senate Bill 407 – Health Occupations – Health Care Staffing Shortage Emergency Declaration and Licensing and Practice Requirements (Health Care Heroes Act of 2022)**.