



576 Johnsville Road
Sykesville, MD 21784

TO: Health and Government Operations
FROM: LeadingAge Maryland
SUBJECT: House Bill 975, Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment for Nurses and Nursing Workers – Program Establishment and Funding
DATE: March 4, 2022
POSITION: **Favorable**

LeadingAge Maryland supports House Bill 975, Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment for Nurses and Nursing Workers – Program Establishment and Funding

LeadingAge Maryland is a community of more than 135 not-for-profit aging services organizations serving residents and clients through continuing care retirement communities, affordable senior housing, assisted living, nursing homes and home and community-based services. Our mission is to expand the world of possibilities for aging in Maryland. We partner with consumers, caregivers, researchers, public agencies, faith communities and others who care about aging in Maryland.

This bill establishes the Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program Fund for Nurses and Nursing Workers to assist nurses and nursing workers with the repayment of education loans. The bill also requires the Comptroller to distribute \$400,000 to make grants for the Program.

With a health care system strained by an aging population and expanded access to public health care, nurses play a central role. According to the American Nurses Association, by 2022, there will be far more registered nurse jobs available than any other profession, at more than 100,000 per year. With more than 500,000 seasoned RNs anticipated to retire by 2022, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects the need for 1.1 million new RNs for expansion and replacement of retirees, and to avoid a nursing shortage.

The Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program Fund for Nurses and Nursing Workers, under House Bill 975, seeks to recruit and retain health care professionals to needed areas and facilities within Maryland. Loan forgiveness is an important benefit for health care professionals as well as health care facilities and communities experiencing a shortage of access to primary health care services.

For these reasons, LeadingAge Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report for House Bill 975.

For more information, please contact Aaron J. Greenfield, 410.446.1992