



TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
HOUSE HEALTH AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
House Bill 218: Health Occupations – Nursing – Dialysis Technicians
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 House Bill 218. 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.

House Bill 218 would establish a separate category of certified dialysis technicians to be certified by the State Board of Nursing and would repeal the requirement that a dialysis technician be a certified nursing assistant. Under this proposed legislation, dialysis technicians would have their own training programs and an individual would become a certified dialysis technician rather than a CNA-DT.

We sincerely commend the sponsor for bringing this legislation forward. While we appreciate the intent of further specializing the role of dialysis technicians, we are concerned that it could, at this time, potentially worsen the ongoing workforce shortage by imposing additional requirements for dialysis technicians. In addition, it would place additional burdens on the Maryland Board of Nursing (MBON).

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.

In addition to the shortage of healthcare workers, 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. I personally and professionally have high confidence in MBON Executive Director Karen Evans and her team – they have been engaged and thoughtful partners throughout this process. However, imposing additional requirements at this time could be unnecessarily burdensome and counterproductive.

For these reasons, we respectfully request an unfavorable report for House Bill 218.

Submitted by:
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