



Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill: House Bill 625 – Commission to Study the Health Care Workforce Crisis in Maryland - Establishment

Hearing Date: February 10, 2022

Position: Support with Amendments

The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) supports *House Bill 625 – Commission to Study the Health Care Workforce Crisis in Maryland* with amendments. The bill establishes broad commission to study workforce shortages in every aspect of health care and develop recommendations for future action.

MNA supports the bill because Maryland is facing a current nursing workforce shortage. This crisis existed before COVID-19, but the pandemic has raised the crisis to a new level. Nurses are not the only providers in this situation. There are also major shortages of behavioral health providers, nursing extenders such as certified nursing assistants and certified medical technicians, and school health providers such as speech pathologists.

We have several recommended amendments to support the work of the Commission which we have delineated below. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net or (443) 926-3443.

Amendment 1: Input from health professional associations

On page 2 in line 21, strike “may” and replace with “shall”.

Explanation: The bill permits the Commission to establish advisory committees. MNA believes that this should be a requirement, as the input of health professional associations and health facilities and programs will be important.

Amendment 2: Expand focus to include school health

On page 2 in line 29, add “primary and secondary schools” after “nursing homes”

Explanation: The evaluation of shortages will only be complete if the Commission includes school settings and school practitioners, such as school nurses, school psychologists, occupational therapists, and speech pathologists.

Amendment 3: Clarifying temporary licensure

On page 3 in 16, insert “where applicants meet State licensure requirements” after “health occupations”

Explanation: MNA is opposed to waiving state licensure requirements for nurses or other health care practitioners. Marylanders deserve the law to ensure that health care practitioners meet state licensure requirements.

Amendment 4: Clarifying the importance of clinical requirements

On page 3 in lines 21-22, strike “barriers posed by clinical requirements” and replace with “options to enhance opportunities for clinical placements and trainings to allow students to gain sufficient supervised clinical experience.”

Explanation: Nurses believe that clinical requirements are the backbone of the clinical education of any type of clinician including nurses. Nursing programs and other clinical education programs are experiencing significant barriers in identifying clinical placements. This Commission could truly advance clinical education and expand the workforce by focusing on expanding opportunities for clinical placements.

Amendment 5: Clarifying meaning of training programs for the direct health care workforce

On page 3 in lines 28-29, we are unsure what “comparing training programs for the direct care workforce in nursing compared to programs to traditionally male industries”. If this sentence refers to registered nursing, we are uncomfortable with several of the concepts including the inference that nursing is still predominately a female workforce, as the number of male nurses has been increasing rapidly. We are also uncomfortable with the use of the word “training”. Nurses become nurses through “education” programs. The word training has a different

context and does not reflect the educational requirements and the complexity of didactic and clinical experiences required for nursing.

Amendment 6: Secretary's authority over the boards

On page 4, we ask for line 12 to be removed in its entirety. This provision says "what authority the Secretary should have over the boards." While this is a topic that has arisen, we think it is a governance discussion rather a workforce shortage discussion; and we believe the topic could be distracting to the central purpose of the Commission.