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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
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**TESTIMONY FOR HEALTH AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
COMMITTEE**

CHAIR SHANE PENDERGRASS
VICE CHAIR JOSELINE PENA-MELNYK

**HOUSE BILL 1464 – MARYLAND LOAN ASSISTANCE REPAYMENT PROGRAM
FOR PHYSICIANS AND PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS - ALTERATIONS**

SUPPORT

March 16, 2022

Good Afternoon Chairman Pendergrass and Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk. I am here today to ask for your support for HB 1464 – Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program for Physicians and Physician Assistants – Alterations. This is a follow-up to a bill passed by Appropriations in 2020 that increased funding for the State’s LARP program, and required a study of the program by the Department of Health. The funds have been issued, and the study has been published, so our goal now is implementing the recommendations of the study.

The recommendations the study makes, and the bill requires are twofold. First, they recommend that part-time physicians and physician assistants be made eligible for pro-rated loan repayment benefits. Second, they recommend that a permanent LARP Advisory Council be established. This Council would serve a number of functions including: ensuring federal funds are maximized; prioritizing funding based on available data; and monitoring similar loan programs in other states to ensure Maryland remains competitive.

Pursuing MDH’s recommendations will ensure that the MLARP program remains effective, and Maryland continues to have the access to care they require. Currently, Maryland is one of the top exporters of physicians. While we should be proud that our doctors are in such high demand, our citizens should not lose out on the benefit of this quality education. The rural and otherwise underserved areas in our State desperately need physicians. Ensuring this program’s success into the future will fill those gaps and keep them filled.

Thank you for your time and I urge a favorable report on HB 1464