



## **Statement of Maryland Rural Health Association**

To the Senate Finance Committee

February 4, 2022

Senate Bill 407 Health Occupations- Health care staffing shortages emergency- declaration and licensing and practice requirements

### **POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMMENDMENT**

Chair Kelly, Vice Chair Feldman, Senator Beidle, and members of the Committee, the Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA) is in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 407, the Healthcare Heroes Act.

MRHA supports this legislation that declares a health care staffing shortage emergency in the state and requires health occupation boards to establish processes for expediting licensure.

Health care staffing shortages are particularly pronounced in Maryland's rural communities. MRAH's top legislative priority this year is to support initiatives that respond to rural health care workforce needs, critical shortages and future pipelines.

Please consider adding local health departments to those identified as "health care facilities" as they are also experiencing staff vacancies and play a critical role in ending the state of emergency.

MHRA believes this legislation is important to support our rural communities and we urge your support with this amendment.

*Jennifer Berkman, MEd Board President 443-783-0480*