



Statement of Maryland Rural Health Association

To the House Health and Government Operations Committee

March 4, 2022

House Bill 975 Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment for Nurses and Nursing Workers -
Program Establishment and Funding

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chairman Pendergrass, Vice Chair Peña-Melnyk, and members of the Committee, the Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA) is in SUPPORT of House Bill 975, Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment for Nurses and Nursing Workers.

MRHA supports this legislation that establishes and funds a loan repayment program for nurses and nursing workers. There is currently an unprecedented shortage of 3900 nurses in Maryland and health care staffing shortages are particularly pronounced in Maryland's rural communities.¹ MRHA's top legislative priority this year is to support initiatives that respond to rural health care workforce needs, critical shortages and future pipelines. This bill will encourage and enable more Marylanders to enter the field of nursing and it will attract nursing students, nurses, and nursing workers to Maryland.

MHRA believes this legislation is important to support our rural communities and we urge a favorable report.

Jennifer Berkman, MEd Board President 443-783-0480

¹ The Baltimore Sun. [Programs in Maryland aim to attract and keep the 'starry-eyed' among nurses amid bruising pandemic.](#)