



Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill Number: HB 1208 - Health Occupations - Health Care Workforce Expansion

Hearing Date: March 3, 2022

Position: Support with Amendments

The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) supports *House Bill 1208 – Health Occupations – Health Care Workforce Expansion*. The bill advances concrete, actionable strategies to address the shortage of nurses and nurse support staff (certified nursing assistants, certified medication technicians, and geriatric nursing assistants).

The nursing shortage crises has reached historic levels. In a letter to Secretary Xavier Becerra of the Department of Health and Human Services in September, the American Nurses Association called for sustained action:

“To address this crisis and to ensure that we have a strong nursing workforce for the future, ANA urges the Administration to declare a national nurse staffing crisis and take immediate steps to develop and implement both short- and long-term solutions.”

With House Bill 1208 and House Bill 625 (Commission to Study the Health Care Workforce Crises in Maryland) combined, the Maryland General Assembly has the framework to take immediate step and long-term steps to address the crises. House Bill 1208 provides immediate relief by:

- Making the clinical externship program for nursing students into a permanent program. Externs were utilized during the public health emergency. The bill provides for a consistent regulatory framework to ensure the program can be sustained and meaningful;
- Addresses the shortage of preceptors for nursing students by providing a tax credit. The shortage has become acute during COVID, and nursing educations report that it has

made it more challenging for nursing students to complete their educational requirements;

- Studying if the Maryland Department of Labor’s apprenticeship program may be useful in supporting the expansion of the health care workforce, including professionals, such as community health workers, who are not licensed by a health occupations board;
- Supporting efforts to collect information about the number of nurses and nurse support staff by geographic location and health care setting. This information will support planning and evaluation efforts; and
- Providing for more accessible information about pathways to become licensed or certified under the Board of Nursing.

MNA is in strong support of all these provisions. We have attached technical amendments that support implementation of the bill. If we can provide any additional information to support the Committee’s work on this critical bill, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

ⁱ https://www.nursingworld.org/~4a49e2/globalassets/rss-assets/analettertohhs_staffingconcerns_final-2021-09-01.pdf

MNA's Technical Amendments to HB 1208

Accessible Information about Pathways to Nursing

Amendment 1

On page 5, move lines 10-20 to Health General.

Explanation: MNA would defer to the Board of Nursing on whether the Board or the Department of Health should be the lead in preparing a "one stop" place for people to obtain information on pathways to become a nurse or a nurse support staff.

Amendment 2

On page 5 in line 18, insert "IN MARYLAND" after "OPTIONS".

On page 5 in line, 20, insert "IN MARYLAND" after "PROGRAMS".

Explanation: We thought the addition of "in Maryland" would clarify that the scope of the information was specific to Maryland.

Amendment 3

On page 7 from line 41 through page 8 in line 33, strike "NURSE PRACTITIONER" and replace with "ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSE".

Explanation: The clarification would recognize that any type of APRN may be a nurse preceptor.

Amendment 4

On page 11 in line 32, strike "and"; and on page 12 in line 1 after "program", insert "AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NOMENCLATURE TO DESCRIBE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS FOR HEALTH CARE APPRENTICES".