



**Committee:** House Health and Government Operations Committee

**Bill:** Senate Bill 440 – Commission to Study the Health Care Workforce Crisis in Maryland - Establishment

**Hearing Date:** March 22, 2022

**Position:** Support with Amendments

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The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) supports *Senate bill 440 – 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](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net) or (443) 926-3443.

**Amendment 1:**

We prefer the House version of the legislation in taking a broad-based support in studying shortages in all health occupations on page 2

**Amendment 2: Expand focus to include school health**

On page 4 in line 2, 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.*

### **Amendment 3: Clarifying temporary licensure**

On page 4 in 20, 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 5: Clarifying the importance of clinical requirements**

On page 4 in lines 35-26, 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 6: Secretary’s authority over the boards**

On page 5, we ask for line 16 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.

### **Amendment 7: Utilizing Prior Study on Veteran**

On page 5 in line 25, we ask for the following to be inserted after “workforce”:

“AS RECOMMENDED BY THE MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN’S AFFAIRS FINAL REPORT SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH CHAPTERS 511 AND 512 OF 2010”

*Explanation: The work of the Commission could be expedited by utilizing a prior study on the same issue as required by 2010 legislation.*

