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Patrick Moran - President

Testimony
HB 218 – Health Occupations – Nursing – Dialysis Technicians
Health and Government Operations
February 1, 2022
FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENT

AFSCME Maryland Council 3 represents 30,000 state employees, including the Dialysis Technicians and Certified Nursing Assistants who work in the Maryland Department of Health. We support efforts in HB 218 to certify Dialysis Technicians under the Maryland Board of Nursing. This specialized and important work should be treated as such.

Our only concern with HB 218 is that it removes the requirement for Dialysis Technicians to hold Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certificates. The Dialysis Technicians who currently work for the Maryland Department of Health carry CNA licenses and our members feel like it is important to maintain the CNA requirement for this position. A Dialysis Tech who has a CNA can help contribute better to the total care of the patient. In our state chronic hospitals, the patients who are on dialysis often require additional bed and bath care. Having a Dialysis Tech who is also a CNA helps to contribute to the continuity of care for these patients.

Our members also think it is a mistake to downgrade professional qualifications to deal health care staffing shortages. In the long run, this only leads to compromised patient care and staff who are less versatile as they pursue advances in their own careers. We still believe that the best way to solve the health care worker staffing shortages is to increase pay and incentives, and to improve working conditions by supporting unions.

As such, we hope to work with the sponsor and members of this committee to amend the following to:

Pg. 9, lines 13 – 16

*(iii) Has successfully completed nursing assistant training **AND DIALYSIS TECHNICIAN TRAINING** that meets the standards for an approved nursing assistant training program **AND DIALYSIS TECHNICIAN TRAINING PROGRAM** established under this subtitle and the standards adopted by the Board; and*

For these reasons, we urge the committee to provide a favorable report on HB 218 with the above-listed amendment. Thank you.

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An employee has the right to a union representative if requested by the employee.
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