



Maryland
Hospital Association

Senate Bill 518 - Career Pathways for Health Care Workers Program

Position: *Support as Amended in the Senate*

March 31, 2022

House Health & Government Operations Committee

MHA Position

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to support Senate Bill 518 as amended in the Senate.

Maryland faces a staggering health care workforce crisis, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020 Maryland's registered nurse (RN) population per capita was in the bottom third of the nation.¹ Currently, 23.5% of nursing and medical positions (RNs, NPs, MDs, etc.) are vacant—an increase of nearly 34% since late summer. Vacancies among licensed practical nurses rose a staggering 135%.

We cannot rely just on the future generation to fill the gaps in our health care workforce. We need to grow our own, starting with the existing hospital workforce. From dietary workers to certified nursing assistants and registered nurses, hospitals help employees grow in their careers. SB 518 offers a pathway to expand this concept statewide. This bill requires the Maryland Department of Health to establish a matching grant program for hospitals and related institutions to pay for employees to attend health care worker training programs. This concept offers an innovative path and a win-win for employers, employees, and our state educational institutions.

Maryland hospitals fully support the concept of SB 518 as an essential tool to address the workforce shortage crisis, and appreciated the opportunity to work with SEIU on amendments to strengthen its impact.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB 518 as it was amended in the Senate.

For more information, please contact:

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¹ Becker's Hospital Review. (Feb. 18, 2022). "[RN population per capita, by state](#)"