March 7, 2023

To: The Honorable C.T. Wilson, Chair, House Economic Matters Committee

Re: Letter of Support- House Bill 1136- State Government - Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability - Review of State Workforce Development Programs

Dear Chair Wilson:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of House Bill 1136.

Maryland hospitals are facing the most critical staffing shortage in recent memory. According to the most recent MHA data, RNs & LPNs/nursing assistants make up 39% of Maryland's hospital workforce.[1] Right now, one in every four nursing positions is vacant.[2] This situation will worsen according to a 2022 GlobalData report, which estimates a statewide shortage of 5,000 full-time registered nurses and 4,000 licensed practical nurses. Without intervention, shortages could double or even triple by 2035.

MHA's 2022 State of Maryland's Health Care Workforce report outlines a roadmap to ensure Maryland has the health care workforce it needs now and in the future. One recommendation for policymakers is to designate a state entity responsible for multi-agency coordination of data driven policy change and programs. HB 1136 aligns with this recommendation by requiring the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability to review the state's workforce development programs and inventory who is served, eligibility requirements, and whether there is overlap, duplication, gaps, or fragmentation.

There are many beneficial workforce development programs but they are underutilized and not coordinated. HB 1136 is a good first step to help understand the scope of the state's workforce development programs. With this knowledge, we can leverage resources and funding to support the health care workforce and build the pipeline.

For these reasons we ask for a *favorable* report on HB 1136.

For more information, please contact:
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[1] MHA Workforce Survey – January 2023
[2] MHA Workforce Survey – January 2023