



Maryland
Hospital Association

January 24, 2023

To: The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Re: Letter of Support- Senate Bill 121- More Opportunities for Career-Focused Students Act of 2023

Dear Chair Feldman:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of Senate Bill 121.

Maryland hospitals are facing the most critical staffing shortage in recent memory. A 2022 [GlobalData](#) report 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 into the future. One of the key components is to remove barriers to health care education through tuition assistance, stipends, loan repayment, and other incentives.

SB 121 elevates the pursuit of vocational training for students. This is important for the health care workforce. Many hospital jobs do not require a four-year degree. Registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and nursing assistants, who comprise 39% of the hospital workforce, require a maximum of a two-year degree except for a registered nurse, who can pursue a two-or four-year degree.¹ Other hospital jobs only require a certification such as a pharmacy technician.

Hospital data show nearly 1 in 5 or 18.9% of nursing assistant positions are currently vacant.¹ Over the past year, Maryland hospitals worked together to address the high demand for certified nursing assistants (CNAs) by creating an acute care CNA pathway, which includes a standardized exam.

SB 121 would acknowledge the acute care CNA pathway as a viable post-secondary education opportunity for students. This bill opens the door to opportunities for students who want to start their career immediately after high school.

For these reasons, we request a *favorable* report on SB 121.

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