

March 13, 2023

The Honorable Melony Griffith
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB 669 – Support with Amendment

Dear Chair Griffith and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the University of Maryland School of Nursing, I am pleased to provide our support with amendment for SB 669 – “Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship Program Workgroup,” sponsored by the Honorable Jim Rosapepe.

We support this legislation with the request that a representative of the University of Maryland School of Nursing be added as a listed member of the Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship Program Workgroup under this legislation. Given our significant role in nursing education in Maryland and nationally, we believe that we can provide important expertise with regard to the multiple current and potential pathways for nursing education, including related regulatory and accreditation issues.

The University of Maryland School of Nursing is one of the oldest and largest schools of nursing in the United States. We are a part of the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), Maryland’s public health, law, and human services university. UMB through its six professional schools of medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, law, social work, and nursing, as well as its Graduate School, confers the majority of the health care, human services, and law professional degrees in Maryland each year.

With over 2,000 students across our undergraduate and graduate degree programs, the University of Maryland School of Nursing is an essential part of the fabric of nursing education in our State and nationally. The School of Nursing offers an entry-into-practice Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree (BSN), an RN-to-BSN degree for those already licensed as nurses, an entry-into-practice Master of Science in Nursing degree (MSN) for those with a prior degree in another field, as well as Master of Science in Nursing, Doctor of Nursing Practice, and PhD degrees. At present, we have approximately 740 entry-into-practice BSN students studying in Baltimore and in the University of Maryland School of Nursing Program at the Universities at Shady Grove in Rockville, Maryland. When combined with our masters-level entry-into-practice students, this collective cohort numbers over 950 students, who upon graduation and licensure will be new entrants to our nursing workforce.

As an upper-division baccalaureate program, we provide the final two years of specialized nursing education leading to the BSN. Our entry-into-practice BSN students will have completed the first two years of their education at another accredited college or university. Accordingly, we have longstanding collaborative partnerships with the 15 community colleges in Maryland that offer the Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN), as well as significant relationships with the University of Maryland, College Park, and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. These articulation agreements and formal relationships, provide for the seamless transfer of students into our program, and ensure that students continue their nursing education, obtain the BSN degree increasingly preferred by major employers, and that they do so in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

I would further note the School of Nursing's significant commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Across our degree programs, 53% of our students identify as racially and/or ethnically diverse, significantly exceeding the national average for nursing programs. Recruiting and educating future nurses for our increasingly diverse society is an important undertaking and we have substantial experience in increasing the representation of minorities and ethnically diverse students, faculty, and staff within the University of Maryland School of Nursing.

We are deeply supportive of the need to carefully explore all possible pathways to a nursing education and nursing degree in order to address the ongoing and future shortages in the nursing profession and other occupations necessary for ensuring that Maryland's residents are able to receive competent and compassionate health care.

We thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our request to be included as a member of the Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship Program under SB 669 or related legislation. I would be pleased to provide any additional information or respond to any questions from members of the Committee. I can be reached by phone at: 775-706-6740 or by email at: kirschling@umaryland.edu.

Thank you for your diligent efforts to address the current and future challenges faced by Maryland's health care workforce.

Sincerely,



Jane Kirschling, PhD, RN, FAAN
The Bill and Joanne Conway Dean and Professor
University of Maryland School of Nursing
Director, Interprofessional Education
University of Maryland, Baltimore

cc: The Honorable Jim Rosapepe