



Senate Finance Committee
Senate Bill 669 - Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship Program Workgroup
Support with Amendments
March 14, 2023

The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) supports *SB 669 – Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship Program Workgroup* with amendments. MNA supports this legislation because this workgroup would assist policy makers in determining if this model should be explored further in Maryland.

Apprenticeship Models and Nursing Educational Programs for Registered Nurses

There are common challenges when trying to align an apprenticeship model with an educational program for registered nurses (RNs) We suggest that the SB 669 Workgroup address these issues directly or they may continue to be stumbling blocks for further discussions:

- ***Clinical Educators:*** In nursing education, students learn from clinical educators whose focus is on supporting the student in learning both nursing skills and judgment. This is very different from apprenticeship models, where students typically learn from supervisors who must also focus on ensuring the employer’s goals.

- ***Clinical Rotations:*** In registered nursing education, students must rotate through a wide range of clinical settings including acute care, long-term care, home care, and primary care. There may some logistical challenges in ensuring an apprenticeship model encompasses these settings. This requirement is in the Maryland Nurse Practice Act.

- ***Ensuring Licensure Portability by Meeting National Standards:*** Education for registered nurses is highly standardized across the country. As a result, RNs are able to transition between different health care settings. RNs are also able to work across most state lines, as the majority of states, including Maryland, are members of the Nursing Licensure Compact. Licensure portability is possible because most states require education program to meet the same national accreditation standards. This system is highly advantageous to the health care system – as nurses can transition to settings and locations where the demand is highest. It may be more challenging for educational

programs based on the apprenticeship model to meet national and state standards. These challenges should be explored.

The Apprenticeship Program Workgroup should examine these issues, as they will need to be addressed if Maryland is to pursue apprenticeship models in nursing education for registered nurses.

MNA suggest the following amendments:

On page 2 in line 27 after “certifications” insert “*and address implementation questions, including:*”

- (1) Determining the circumstances where a clinical educator may also be the student’s supervisory in a work setting;*
- (2) Evaluating how an apprenticeship model may provide the full range of supervised clinical education experiences; and*
- (3) Assessing how an apprenticeship model of education may meet national and state standards to ensure the portability of nursing licensure for Maryland RNs.*

Applicability of Apprenticeship Models in Other Areas of Nursing Education

We recommend that there should be further evaluation of the applicability of the apprenticeship model in two other areas of nursing education:

- ***Licensed Practical Nursing:*** Educational programs for licensed practical nurses (LPNs) have a strong skills-based focus, which may fit more easily into an apprenticeship model. In Maryland, Howard County Community College offers an LPN apprenticeship program.ⁱ
- ***Post -Graduate Transition to Practice Programs:*** Transition to practice programs support newly licensed nurses integrating into health care settings. There are 126 transition to practice programs for registered nurses that are dually recognized by the U.S. Department of Labor and the American Nurses Credentialing Center as apprenticeship programs. Just last month, Howard County General Hospital’s Nurse Residency Program became one of the dually recognized programs.ⁱⁱ

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MNA recommends expanding the scope of the workgroup to include LPN and post-graduate transition to practice programs with the following amendments:

On page 2 in line 24 after “registered nurse” insert “*and licensed practical nurse*”

On page 2 in line 25 insert “*may*” after “and that”. Also in line 28 after “and” insert “*(ii) the framework for post-graduate transition to practice programs that may benefit from dually recognition as an Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Program by the U.S. Department of Labor and a Practice Transition Program by the American Nurses Credentialing Center.*”

Composition of the Workgroup

MNA makes the following recommendations to the composition of the workgroup:

- The addition of representatives from nursing education programs at community colleges and four-year programs. Their perspectives will be needed in any decision about nursing education;
- The addition of a representative from the Maryland Nursing Workforce Center at the University of Maryland, Baltimore to provide critical data about the nursing shortage; and
- the deletion of the representative from MedChi as physicians are not involved in nursing education.

Conclusion

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony. If we can provide additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

ⁱ <https://www.howardcc.edu/programs-courses/academics/apprenticeships/lpn-apprenticeship/>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.nursingworld.org/news/news-releases/2020/ancc-practice-transition-accreditation-program-announces-first-dually-recognized-industry-recognized-apprenticeship-programs-iraps-transition-to-practice-programs/>