



TO: The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair  
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee  
The Honorable Ariana B. Kelly

FROM: Danna L. Kauffman  
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DATE: February 9, 2023

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 611 – *State Board of Nursing – Sunset Extension, Licensure Exceptions, and Board Operations and Membership*

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On behalf of the LifeSpan Network, the Maryland Association of Adult Day Services, the Maryland-National Capital Homecare Association, and the Hospice and Palliative Care Network of Maryland, we respectfully **support** House Bill 611. Among other provisions, House Bill 611 makes the following changes to the Maryland Board of Nursing (Board):

- Adds the requirement that the annual report submitted by the Board include aggregate data necessary to facilitate workforce and health planning purposes;
- Requires another sunset review of the Board in two years;
- Transfers the administrative, staffing, and infrastructure operations from the Board to the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Health;
- Removes the requirement that the Executive Director of the Board must be a registered nurse; and
- Staggers the removal of the current Board members and requires new appointments to the Board - five board members' term ends July 1, 2023; five members end October 1, 2023, and five members end on January 1, 2024.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Maryland was already facing a workforce crisis due to several factors. Maryland's 60+ population is anticipated to increase from 1.2 million to 1.7 million by 2030, a 40% increase. At the same time, the primary labor pool for direct care workers employed in senior and community settings (women aged 25-64) is growing at less than one percent. According to the Maryland Hospital Association's 2022 State of Maryland's Healthcare Workforce Report, the nursing home, home health, and residential care industries are projected to have the highest future demand for registered nurses and licensed practical nurses. This holds true for certified nursing assistants as well. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these issues and demonstrates the need for Maryland to commit to developing a robust health care workforce so that it is prepared to care for this population.

We believe that the changes contained in House Bill 611 will provide better tools and resources to the Maryland Board of Nursing to ensure that it has the capability to efficiently process applications and respond timely to inquiries. With these changes, it is our hope that the Board will be able to address current issues facing it and alleviate concerns that qualified applicants must "wait on the sidelines" for their application to be processed, rather than providing care to Maryland residents.