



Hospice & Palliative Care Network
OF MARYLAND

TO: The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Kenneth Kerr

FROM: Danna L. Kauffman
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DATE: February 22, 2023

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 531 – *Certified Nursing Assistants – Licensing Requirements and Administrative Updates*

On behalf of the LifeSpan Network, the Maryland-National Capital Homecare Association, and the Hospice & Palliative Care Network of Maryland, we respectfully **support** House Bill 531. The purpose of House Bill 531 is to eliminate barriers and provide nursing homes with greater flexibility in hiring individuals.

As you have repeatedly heard, Maryland is experiencing a healthcare worker shortage. The nursing home industry has been hit particularly hard and has been cited in the Maryland Hospital Association 2022 State of Maryland's Health Care Workforce Report as having the highest future demand for registered nurses and licensed practical nurses. This also holds true for the need for additional nursing assistants, who are the backbone of the nursing home workforce. However, because of restrictions in Maryland, nursing homes cannot hire certified nursing assistants (CNAs). Rather, nursing homes in Maryland can only hire geriatric nursing assistants, which creates an additional hurdle in hiring.

It is unclear why Maryland is an outlier in this standard. Nationally, CNAs can work in all settings, including nursing homes. Maryland requires that a CNA obtain an additional designation on his/her certification. It does not require additional training requirements. Therefore, by eliminating extra steps, CNAs will have the option to work in all settings, easing hiring. This will also help nursing homes that border contiguous states not lose workers because of this restriction.

Removing unnecessary barriers in hiring benefits the continuum as a whole. Nursing homes have had to limit admissions because of not having enough staff, which hurts the hospitals and other care settings. House Bill 531 will align Maryland with other states and help nursing homes hire to ensure that they can meet staffing requirements and provide quality care to residents. We urge a favorable vote.