

LeadingAge Maryland - 2024 - SB 137 RN Apprentices

Uploaded by: Aaron Greenfield

Position: FAV



576 Johnsville Road
Sykesville, MD 21784

TO: Finance Committee
FROM: LeadingAge Maryland
SUBJECT: Senate Bill 37, Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship Program Workgroup
DATE: February 13, 2024
POSITION: **Favorable**

LeadingAge Maryland supports Senate Bill 137, Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship Program Workgroup.

LeadingAge Maryland is a community of more than 140 not-for-profit aging services organizations serving residents and clients through continuing care retirement communities, affordable senior housing, assisted living, nursing homes and home and community-based services. Members of LeadingAge Maryland provide health care, housing, and services to more than 20,000 older persons each year. Our mission is to be the trusted voice for aging in Maryland, and our vision is that Maryland is a state where older adults have access to the services they need, when they need them, in the place they call home. We partner with consumers, caregivers, researchers, public agencies, faith communities and others who care about aging in Maryland.

Senate Bill 137 establishes a Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship Program Workgroup to study the feasibility of developing and implementing a nurse apprenticeship program in Maryland. The workgroup shall make recommendations on the program framework and a sustainable funding model and report them to the Governor on or before April 1, 2025.

The pathway to a career in nursing is certainly a challenging one. Enrolling in a nursing program can seem out of reach for many applicants as it is highly competitive and a serious commitment of time and money. A nurse apprenticeship is a potential pathway that provides prospective nurses with a more accessible way of becoming licensed registered nurses. It allows students to work in a healthcare facility and generate income while completing their nursing programs and receiving their education. A nurse apprentice is allowed an opportunity to hands-on experience and to be well trained and prepared to enter the workforce. Employers are also

given a chance to train and work with the students closely and to increase their chances of recruiting them for job positions after graduation.

The state of Maryland is one of the few states allowed to develop and implement apprenticeship training models alongside Illinois, South Dakota, Texas, Washington, and others. The state of Nevada has already taken steps to implement an apprentice nursing program designed by its state's board of nursing. A health system in Kentucky is also among the first to create a state-accredited nursing apprenticeship in the United States, developed in response to a profound nursing shortage in the state. Another one implemented in Minnesota had 122 nurse apprentices enrolled by 2018, after being awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to fund apprenticeships for nurses. The Alabama Board of Nursing is among the latest to permit and regulate Student Nurse Apprentices, which went into effect in March 2022.

The worsening healthcare workforce crisis calls for immediate relief through all appropriate means available to us. A registered nurse apprenticeship program offers such relief by providing a new and accessible pathway to a career in nursing. The gap in nursing is profound across all states including Maryland. As other states begin to take steps forward, Maryland should be allowed to do the same. This bill allows the formation of a Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship Program Workgroup responsible for reviewing existing models of such programs in other states and countries, studying the feasibility of developing and implementing one in our State, and reporting recommendations on its structure and funding. This will facilitate a first step in the development of our own nurse apprenticeship programs in Maryland.

At LeadingAge Maryland, we advocate for better health outcomes and a stronger healthcare workforce, especially for older populations in greatest need of long-term care. Aging services organizations struggle to meet nursing staffing requirements. We believe Senate Bill 137 offers a collaborative effort and attempt to fill in the gaps for a growing demand in nursing.

For these reasons, LeadingAge Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report for Senate Bill 137.

For additional information, please contact Aaron J. Greenfield, 410.446.1992

SB 137- RN Degree Apprenticeship Program Workgroup

Uploaded by: Jane Krienke

Position: FAV



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 13, 2024

To: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair, Senate Finance Committee

Re: Letter of Support- Senate Bill 137- Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship Program Workgroup

Dear Chair Beidle:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of Senate Bill 137.

Maryland hospitals continue to experience workforce shortages. RNs, LPNs, and nursing assistants make up 59% of the hospital workforce. The latest data show the positions with the highest vacancy rates in Maryland hospitals are:

- Surgical technicians, 17.8%
- Licensed practical nurses (LPN), 16.8%
- Nurse practitioners, 12.3%
- Registered nurses (RN), 12.1%

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 recommendation is to remove barriers to education to expand and grow a diverse and talented workforce. Howard County Community College, for example, launched an [LPN apprenticeship program](#) and surgical technician apprenticeship program and is partnering with local hospitals.¹

Given the complexities associated with the RN educational pathway, it is essential the work group include industry experts, academia, and the appropriate regulatory and state entities. SB 137 ensures a robust and diverse group of professionals explores this concept fully. Together we can build pathways to stable careers with opportunities for upward economic mobility. In doing so, we can grow our own health care workforce.

For these reasons, we ask for a *favorable* report on SB 137.

For more information, please contact:
Jane Krienke, Senior Legislative Analyst, Government Affairs
Jkrienke@mhaonline.org

¹ Business Monthly. "[HCC Partners with Hospitals on Apprenticeship Programs.](#)" (Dec. 1, 2022).

HFAM Testimony SB 137.pdf

Uploaded by: Joseph DeMattos

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

February 13, 2024

Senate Bill 137: Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship Program Workgroup
Written Only Testimony

POSITION: FAVORABLE

On behalf of the members of the Health Facilities Association of Maryland (HFAM), we appreciate the opportunity to express our support for Senate Bill 137. HFAM represents skilled nursing centers and assisted living communities in Maryland, as well as associate businesses that offer products and services to healthcare providers. Our members provide services and employ individuals in nearly every jurisdiction of the state. HFAM is affiliated with the American Health Care Association/National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL), which is the largest association in the United States representing long-term and post-acute care providers.

Senate Bill 137 establishes the Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship Program Workgroup to study the feasibility of developing and implementing a registered nurse degree apprenticeship program in the State; and requires the Workgroup, on or before April 1, 2025, to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor, the Senate Finance Committee, and the House Health and Government Operations Committee.

We are grateful that a representative from the Health Facilities Association of Maryland (HFAM) is included in the Workgroup. We believe that the expertise from our organization will add valuable insight from the lens of long-term and post-acute care providers. This legislation is important to finding solutions to staffing challenges and removing barriers to entry for those pursuing a career in nursing so that we can produce more licensed nursing professionals across the continuum. Together we have a tremendous opportunity to place resources that support nurses and alleviate the shortage of nursing professionals.

As we plan our long-term “new normal” in healthcare, we are placing considerable attention on how on-the-job training, apprenticeship programs, trade studies, and traditional post-secondary education can be overlapped to produce more licensed professionals across the care continuum. Just as there are incremental steps of professional development and job classification in traditional trade apprenticeship approaches, we are looking at developing similar types of career ladders in healthcare.

Healthcare today, especially nursing across the continuum of care, faces the greatest shortage and the most tremendous opportunity in workforce development in a generation. To meet this opportunity and succeed, we must deploy new tools and create innovative public-private partnerships.

For these reasons we request a favorable report from the Committee on Senate Bill 137.

Submitted by:
Joseph DeMattos, Jr.
President and CEO
(410) 290-513

2024 MNA SB 137 Senate Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FAV



Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Bill Number: Senate Bill 137 – Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship Program - Workgroup

Hearing Date: February 13, 2024

Position: Support

The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) supports *Senate Bill 137 – Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship Program – Workgroup*. The bill creates a workgroup to study whether there should be an apprenticeship pathway for registered nurses.

MNA believes there is opportunity with the apprenticeship model for licensed practical nurses (LPN). There are some hybrid education-apprenticeship models for LPN education that should be thoroughly examined, as there might be federal funding available to support implementation. The bill includes the study of LPN apprenticeship models, which is aligned with another bill on nursing education: *SB 718 - Maryland Pathway to Nursing Pilot Program and Advisory Committee – Establishment*.

MNA believes the higher education model is most appropriate for registered nurses. However, given all the discussion about apprenticeship models in general, we are pleased to be included on the workgroup. Last year after the hearing on SB 669, we worked with the sponsor in identifying who should be included in the discussion. We want to thank the sponsor for working with us and including the broader nursing and education communities in the workgroup as well. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.