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**Testimony of Catherine Posada, MD, MPH**

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**before**

**Senate Finance Committee**

**IN SUPPORT OF**

**SB 371: Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Provider Agencies and Personal Care Aides –  
Reimbursement and Wage Reports (Homecare Workers Livable Wage Act of 2024)**

**February 6, 2024**

Chairwoman Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in favor of Senate Bill 371. My name is Catherine Posada, MD, MPH, and I am a Pediatrician at Children's National Hospital. Children's National has been serving the nation's children since 1870. Nearly 60% of our patients are residents of Maryland, and we maintain a network of community-based pediatric practices, surgery centers and regional outpatient centers in Maryland.

In my role at Children's National, I am a pediatrician with the Complex Care Program who provides primary care to infants, children, and adolescents with medical complexities and aid them in accessing comprehensive medical care, receive care coordination, and assist with establishing the home care nursing that this vulnerable patient population deserve. Most of the patients we serve qualify for and need private-duty nursing. This ensures that there is always an alert and capable care giver in the home that can monitor their various medical needs, ensure their safety and optimize their health status. Patients may require assistance with monitoring vital signs, administering feeds, monitoring respiratory equipment, administering medications and assisting with other activities of daily living. Some families run "mini-ICU's" from their home.

Unfortunately, the pay rate for private duty nurses has not kept pace with current market rates for nurses in other healthcare settings, making it nearly impossible for home care agencies to staff these medically fragile patients. This leaves medically complex patients and their overburdened parents, as well as their hospitals, in challenging circumstances. In many cases it is unsafe to discharge a medically fragile patient without nursing, which results in the inability to discharge the patient from the hospital. Thus, resulting in extended hospital stays which reduce access for critically ill patients and increased financial burden to families and payors like Maryland Medicaid.

Private duty nursing services are necessary to help our patients remain in their homes, decrease serious adverse or fatal events, minimize hospital admissions and emergency room utilization. Vast improvements in reimbursement and wages are essential to attract more nurses that can provide quality care to medically complex patients.

We strongly encourage and support efforts that would assist with closing the wage gap and providing benefits to personal care aids and private duty nurses. I applaud Senator Lam for introducing this important legislation, which will have a direct impact on the medically complex patients and families that we serve in Maryland and request a favorable report on Senate Bill 371. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. I am happy to respond to any questions you may have.