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The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony in support of **SB999 Certified Nursing Assistants - Licensing Requirements and Administrative Updates**. This legislation makes changes to the licensing requirements for certified nursing assistants (CNAs). Additionally, the bill updates the current practice and training structures for CNA recruitment.

The need for healthcare organizations to expand their care delivery models and build strong pipelines is more critical since the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent workforce turnover. With a baseline shortage of registered nurses (RNs) and a predicted growing gap as a result of retirement and smaller graduation classes, nurse leaders are mentoring nursing students as integral members of a care team, thereby making their transitions to professional nursing after graduation more seamless. This continuity contributes to new grad RN competence, wellness, and retention. SB999 supports the ability for organizations to vet nursing students to work and learn while being supervised by RNs without the student being required to take a CNA certification. The skill component of this exam is commensurate to the skills learned in nursing programs, and therefore, redundant and deterring competent students to work as support staff slowing the recruitment process.

By allowing a graduate of an acute care CNA program to sit for the national exam without requiring the training programs' instructors to meet the federal requirements (i.e. instructors must have 1 year of long-term care experience), SB999 aligns competencies with acute care needs of patients. CNAs are important members of nursing care teams, providing the adequate skill mix to meet all of the patients' needs. Additionally, they are an important part of the RN pipeline for hospitals caring for acutely and critically ill patients. Many CNAs progress through RN programs contributing to the workforce over a longer period of time.

SB999 will allow hospital and nursing leaders to enhance their clinical teams by recruiting and training engaged students and CNAs while sustaining a culture of safety.

Accordingly, I respectfully request a favorable committee report on SB999.

Sincerely,

Deborah Baker, DNP, FAAN, AG-ACNP

