



**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:

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