



Maryland  
Hospital Association

February 12, 2024

To: The Honorable Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair, House Ways & Means Committee

Re: Letter of Support- House Bill 837- More Opportunities for Career-Focused Students Act of 2024

Dear Chair Atterbeary:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 62 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on House Bill 837.

Maryland hospitals continue to experience workforce shortages. Data show high vacancy rates in Maryland hospitals for:

- Surgical technicians, 17.8%
- Licensed practical nurses (LPN), 16.8%
- Nurse practitioners, 12.3%
- Registered nurses (RN), 12.1%
- Radiology technicians, 10.4%

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. The recommendations focus on four areas:

- Expand Maryland's workforce pipeline
- Remove barriers to health care education through tuition assistance, stipends, loan repayment, and other incentives
- Retain the health care workforce
- Leverage talent with new care models

HB 837 would elevate the pursuit of vocational training for students. Many hospital jobs do not require a four-year degree. Registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and nursing assistants—who comprise 39% of the hospital workforce—require a maximum of a two-year degree, except for a registered nurse, who can pursue a two- or four-year degree. Other hospital jobs, such as pharmacy technician, require a certification.

HB 837 would acknowledge pursuing vocational training, including through apprenticeships, as a viable post-secondary education opportunity. Many hospitals have or are exploring how to create apprenticeships for in-demand careers—often in partnership with community colleges. This bill opens the door to opportunities for students who want to start their career immediately



Maryland  
Hospital Association

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[Date]

Page 2

after high school. This would enhance career prospects for our youth and support the needs of the health care system.

For these reasons, we request a favorable report on HB 837.

For more information, please contact:

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