Policy Foundation of Maryland

Committee: Finance
Testimony on: SB0720 - Clinical Staffing Committees and Plans - Establishment (Safe Staffing Act of 2025)
Sponsor(s): Senator Augustine, Senator Lam
Organization: Policy Foundation INC., End Medication Debt Coalition
Person Submitting: Sarahia Benn (CEO/President) PFOM
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: March 4, 2025

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Thank you for allowing testimony today in support of SB0720. Policy Foundation INC. is a grassroots organization focused on State and County level legislation and policies that impacts Black, Brown, Marginalized, low income communities and Veterans affairs. Medical and healthcare legislation is of massive importance to these communities particularly due to how impacted these communities have been historically and currently particularly in for multiply residents in rural areas.

The healthcare system in Maryland, like many across the nation, is in crisis. Overburdened healthcare workers, especially nurses, are leaving the profession at alarming rates due to unsafe staffing levels, burnout, and the overall lack of support. This crisis worsened after the COVID-19 pandemic, and it continues to jeopardize both the well-being of workers and patients. Unsafe staffing conditions directly correlate with poorer patient outcomes, longer stays, and in some cases, unnecessary fatalities. These are not just statistics; these are lives disrupted and communities harmed.

SB 720 provides a solution by creating a worker-driven process at hospitals across Maryland to address staffing conditions. Importantly, this bill doesn't impose rigid staffing ratios, but instead fosters collaboration among hospital administrations, workers, and the state to craft tailored staffing plans. Workers, who are on the front lines of patient care, will have a say in these plans, ensuring that solutions are not only feasible but effective. This level of collaboration is key to addressing the root causes of worker burnout and improving patient outcomes.

A critical component of this bill is its focus on data transparency and accountability. By requiring hospitals to provide accurate staffing information to the Maryland Department of Health, SB 720 will ensure that staffing conditions are regularly monitored, making it possible to track how these conditions impact both worker retention and the quality of care. This data-driven approach will empower the state to take proactive measures to address any shortfalls and improve overall healthcare delivery.

From an economic perspective, SB 720 is a cost-effective solution. Maryland's healthcare model, particularly its Total Cost of Care financing system, is uniquely positioned to benefit from this legislation. By investing in a permanent workforce rather than relying on costly temporary staffing agencies, Maryland can reduce the financial burden on hospitals and ensure that funds are used more efficiently. Permanent staff offer the stability and continuity needed to improve care quality, reduce turnover, and enhance workforce morale.

SB 720 will also ensure that hospitals are prepared for future public health emergencies. By establishing a more resilient and well-supported healthcare workforce, Maryland can better respond to unforeseen challenges and mitigate the effects of future crises. We cannot afford to wait any longer to take action—this bill provides a blueprint for building a healthier, more sustainable healthcare system for all Marylanders.

This bill will protect both workers and patients, improve the quality of care, and ensure that Maryland remains a leader in healthcare policy.

For these reasons, I urge an **FAVORABLE REPORT** on **SB0720**.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarahia Benn
(Policy Foundation of Maryland, End Medical Debt Coalition)

(Dedicated to Black History All Year Round)

"Rarely, if ever, are any of us healed in isolation. Healing is an act of communion."

—-Bell Hooks, poet, activist