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Health and Government Operations Committee
240 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Wednesday, February 19, 2025

HB0905 – Hospitals - Clinical Staffing Committees and Plans - Establishment (Safe Staffing Act of 2025)

Position: **FAVORABLE**

Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and Esteemed Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee:

My name is Ronnie L. Taylor, and I serve as the Advocacy, Policy, & Partnerships Director at FreeState Justice, a nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing legal and systemic inequities affecting Maryland's LGBTQIA+ community. I am here to testify in strong support of **HB0905**, the Safe Staffing Act of 2025, which mandates the establishment of clinical staffing committees and the implementation of comprehensive staffing plans in Maryland hospitals.

HB0905 addresses critical issues in hospital staffing that directly impact patient care quality and safety. Inadequate staffing levels have been linked to negative health outcomes, particularly for marginalized communities, including LGBTQIA+ individuals. Studies have shown that LGBTQIA+ patients often face discrimination and insensitivity in healthcare settings, leading to delays or avoidance of necessary medical care. For instance, approximately 18% of LGBTQIA+ individuals have reported avoiding medical care due to fear of discrimination, with this figure rising to nearly 25% among transgender and gender non-conforming individuals.

HB0905 proposes the following key measures:

1. **Establishment of Clinical Staffing Committees:** Each hospital is required to form a committee with equal representation from management and frontline staff, including roles such as certified nursing assistants, emergency room nurses, and environmental service workers. This inclusive approach ensures that diverse perspectives inform staffing decisions, fostering a more equitable healthcare environment.

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2. **Development and Implementation of Clinical Staffing Plans:** These committees are tasked with creating staffing plans that define appropriate clinician-to-patient ratios and consider factors such as patient acuity and unit-specific needs. Implementing such plans has been associated with improved patient outcomes and reduced disparities in care.
3. **Annual Review and Adjustment:** The bill mandates yearly evaluations of staffing plans to assess their effectiveness and make necessary adjustments. This iterative process allows hospitals to respond to evolving patient demographics and emerging healthcare challenges, ensuring that staffing strategies remain effective and inclusive.

For LGBTQIA+ patients, who often encounter unique health disparities and discrimination, the implementation of well-structured staffing plans is particularly beneficial. Inclusive staffing practices contribute to culturally competent care, enhancing patient trust and reducing instances of discrimination.

In my role at FreeState Justice, I have engaged with numerous LGBTQIA+ individuals who have experienced substandard care due to inadequate staffing and lack of cultural competency in healthcare settings. These encounters underscore the urgent need for systemic reforms, such as those proposed in **HB0905**, to ensure that all patients receive equitable and respectful care.

In closing, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report for **HB0905**. This legislation not only addresses critical gaps in hospital staffing but also reinforces Maryland's commitment to health equity and the well-being of all its residents, including those in the LGBTQIA+ community.

Best,

Ronnie L. Taylor

Ronnie L. Taylor

Sources:

1. [LGBTQIA+ Patient Care - The Hospitalist](#)
2. [Microsoft Word - Research Articles on Racial and LGBTQ+ Disparities and RN Staffing.docx](#)
3. [Nurse leaders' recommendations for implementing LGBTQ+ inclusive practices in health systems: A qualitative descriptive study - PMC](#)
4. [Discrimination Prevents LGBTQ People From Accessing Health Care - Center for American Progress](#)
5. [Amplifying LGBTQIA+ voices for improved health and care](#)
6. [Bridging Healthcare Disparities: A Call to Action for LGBTQIA+ Inclusive Care - The Hospitalist](#)