



Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill Number: HB 905 – Hospitals – Clinical Staffing Committees and Plans – Establishment (Safe Staffing Act of 2025)

Date: February 21, 2025

Position: Information Only

The Maryland Nurses Association is pleased to provide testimony regarding House Bill 905, the "Safe Staffing Act of 2025." MNA supports the goals of HB 905 – to ensure adequate staffing in hospitals for quality patient care. We would like to provide the following informational testimony to assist the committee in its policy deliberations.

The Staffing Committee Composition Lacks Significant Representation by Direct Care Nurses

The current proposed committee composition includes:

- certified nursing assistants
- dietary aides
- emergency room nurses
- environmental service workers
- residents (in teaching hospitals)
- physicians (in non-teaching hospitals)
- technicians.

The composition of the clinical staffing committee under HB 905 appears to be unbalanced and weighted towards non-direct care healthcare providers (CNAs, Dietary Aides, Technicians and Environmental Services Workers). While the bill requires one emergency room nurse, it does not mandate the inclusion of a staff RN. In many cases, ER nurses are not direct hospital employees but rather employees of contractors.

While certified nursing assistants, dietary aides, and environmental service workers all play vital roles in patient care, direct care nurses have a more comprehensive understanding of patient needs, and the challenges faced in hospital settings.

Other Jurisdictions - Greater Representation of Direct Care Nurses

In some states, a higher percentage of direct care nurses are required as members of staffing committees. For example, Illinois mandates that at least 50% of the clinical staffing committee be comprised of direct care nurses. Similarly, the American Nurses Association advocates for at least 55% of staffing committee members to be direct care nurses. Direct care nurses are frontline providers who interact with patients more frequently than any other healthcare professional in a hospital setting. The insights and experiences provided by direct care nurses would be invaluable when creating effective staffing plans.

We respectfully encourage the committee to carefully consider the composition and focus of the clinical staffing committees, as well as the implementation of data-driven approaches to staffing decisions.

For any additional information or clarification, please contact William Kress at bill@kresshammen.com.