

**TO:** The Honorable Joseline Pena-Melnyk, Chair  
*Health and Government Operations*

**HB19**  
**Favorable**

**FROM:** Brandon Floyd  
*Associate Director, Maryland Government Affairs*

**DATE:** January 24, 2025

**RE:** HB19 Health Occupations - Nursing - Loan Repayment, Education, and Sunset Extension  
(Building Opportunities for Nurses Act of 2025)

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Johns Hopkins supports **HB19 Health Occupations - Nursing - Loan Repayment, Education, and Sunset Extension (Building Opportunities for Nurses Act of 2025)**. The bill revises the Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program to focus solely on nurses, introduces new funding and prioritization for loan repayment, modifies nursing licensure requirements, and extends the program. Maryland continues to face a staggering health care workforce crisis. Like many other hospitals, Johns Hopkins has experienced workforce shortages. In response to this, Johns Hopkins has implemented programs to ensure professional growth and development, wellness and well-being of our staff, like competitive pay, and tuition assistance. Johns Hopkins believes that any efforts to improve workforce retention in clinical areas, like nursing, should be strongly pursued.

The existing loan assistance repayment program is one of many tools used to grow the nursing workforce. For example, potential nurses who would otherwise forego nursing careers because of financial limitations have assurances that their educational loans will be paid and, in turn, pursue nursing as a profession. Practically speaking, more nurses in the workforce equates to increased staffed beds and more patients obtaining quality health care.

Marylanders across the state are benefitted as the bill prioritizes loan repayment funding for nurses who practice medical specialties in specified geographic areas. Furthermore, the bill modifies existing laws by altering education requirements for registered nursing licensure and licensure by endorsement, including the introduction of the term "entry-level registered nursing education program." Johns Hopkins appreciates these changes that make this program more accessible to nurses throughout Maryland.

Increasing the nursing workforce is essential to the success of hospitals. HB19 is another resource to grow the nursing profession and resultantly, provide more care for Marylanders.

Accordingly, Johns Hopkins respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on **HB19**.