



**To:** Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

**Bill:** Senate Bill 486 - Higher Education - Maryland Graduate and Professional Scholarship Program - Eligible Institutions

**Date:** March 11, 2026

**Position:** Favorable

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The Maryland Academy of Physician Assistants (MdAPA) strongly supports *Senate Bill 486 - Higher Education - Maryland Graduate and Professional Scholarship Program - Eligible Institutions*. The bill expands the Maryland Graduate and Professional Scholarship Program to include several programs at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, including the physician assistant studies.

Maryland rural communities face a chronic shortage of primary care and specialty providers. On the Eastern Shore, there are communities in every county that have designated as primary care shortage area by the Health Resources and Services Administration.<sup>i</sup> Physician assistants are a critical part of addressing the primary care shortage.<sup>ii</sup> Maryland has already recognized that supporting physician assistants will be a major component of the Rural Health Transformation Grant.<sup>iii</sup>

SB 486 is an important next step for increasing the number of physician assistants on the Eastern Shore. Clinicians who are educated in their communities are more likely to stay in their communities. We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net).

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<sup>i</sup> <https://data.hrsa.gov/topics/health-workforce/shortage-areas/hpsa-find>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11802952/>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://health.maryland.gov/pophealth/Documents/Rural%20Health/RHTP/MD-Project-Narrative-CMS-RHT-26-001-Cover-Updated-Watermark-%283%29.pdf>