



TESTIMONY TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

SB0411: Hospitals- Clinical Staffing Committees and Plans- Establishment (Safe Staffing Act of 2026)

POSITION: Support

BY: Linda Kohn, President

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The League of Women Voters of Maryland believes that all residents should have access to affordable, quality health care, and thus the League supports **SB 411, The Safe Staffing Act of 2026**. “Quality health care” is defined by the League as care “consistent with ‘standard of care’ guidelines, by trained and licensed personnel, **staffed adequately to ensure their own and patient safety.**”

Under SB 411, Maryland hospitals would establish clinical staffing committees to develop plans that meet patient and staff needs, ensure quality care, improve patient safety, and reduce the prolonged wait times in Maryland’s Emergency Rooms, which are currently among the highest in the nation. The committees would be composed of both management and employees. **By ensuring their full participation in staffing committees, the knowledge and experience of frontline direct care workers would be acknowledged and respected.**

“Inadequate nurse staffing are closely associated with poor patient outcomes.”¹ High patient-to-nurse ratios can lead to higher rates of medical errors, more hospital acquired infections and falls, longer hospital stays, increased rates of readmissions, decreased patient satisfaction, and increased mortality.

The goal of Maryland’s newly instituted AHEAD model is to optimize Marylanders’ health and well-being. One focus is to “provide better care for Marylanders by rewarding hospitals for high quality care.”² Instituting clinical staffing committees designed to ensure collaboration, with respect for all members of the healthcare team, would help meet the goals of the AHEAD model, and would ultimately lessen healthcare costs.

Marylanders who come to medical facilities need to trust that they will receive the best of care when they are the most vulnerable. **The League and its 2,000 members urge a favorable report on SB 411.**

¹ <https://www.dpeaficio.org/factsheets/safe-staffing-critical-for-patients-and-nurses#:~:text=Inadequate%20staffing%20endangers%20patients%20and%20nurses%20alike,%2Dsurgical%20units.%5B9%5D>

² <https://hsrc.maryland.gov/Pages/ahead-model.aspx>