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**House Bill 1558: State Board of Physicians – Anesthesiologist Assistants – Licensing
Position: FAVORABLE
March 18, 2026
House Health Committee**

Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in strong support of House Bill 1558. My name is Dr. Brad Taicher, and I am the Chief of Anesthesiology, Pain and Perioperative Medicine at Children's National Hospital. As the region's only standalone children's hospital, Children's National has been serving the nation's children since 1870. For 155 years, we have delivered expert pediatric care at every milestone. Sixty percent of our patients are residents of Maryland, and we maintain a large network of community-based pediatric practices, surgery centers and regional outpatient centers in Maryland. In addition to my role at Children's National, I serve as the Associate Vice Chair for the Society of Pediatric Anesthesia's Committee on Quality and Safety, and I am a Maryland resident.

Nationally, the anesthesia workforce is experiencing a critical shortage. According to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), there is currently a shortage of 3,720 physician anesthesiologists across the country. By 2038, the shortage is projected to increase to 10,660.¹ Factors like early retirement, aging populations, and rising surgical volumes have left hospitals and providers not being able to meet the demand for anesthesia services. Maryland is not immune to this shortage. Data analysis from the Maryland Department of Labor using data from Lightcast noted that in 2019 there were 624 physician anesthesiologists in Maryland whereas in 2025 there were only 250 – a decrease of 60%.²

Aging is a major factor in both the workforce shortage and the rising demand for services. We know that the anesthesia workforce is aging alongside Maryland's population, and we already can't meet the demand for anesthesiologists and anesthesia services. Unfortunately,

¹ HRSA Workforce Projections: [Workforce Projections](#)

² See attachment A (Lightcast, a labor market analytics company)

the shortage impacts care for both ends of the age spectrum. Aging populations intensify the need for surgical care and anesthesia providers. On the other hand, there is a significant national shortage of pediatric anesthesiologists, which is expected to persist for some time. In fact, fewer medical school graduates are entering into pediatrics let alone pediatric anesthesiology as a specialty.³

While the shortage of physician anesthesiologists will not be resolved overnight, there is a clear and immediate policy opportunity to address this critical workforce gap and the resulting barriers to patient access to care. Through licensing Certified Anesthesiologist Assistants (CAAs) in Maryland, we can safely provide care to the greatest number of residents closest to home. Currently, CAAs can practice in 23 states and jurisdictions – a number that continues to grow each year. This includes our neighboring states of Washington DC, which licensed CAAs over two decades ago, and Virginia, which passed its licensure bill last year.

Most anesthesia care in the U.S. is provided directly by a physician anesthesiologist or by a non-physician anesthesia clinician led by a physician anesthesiologist within the Anesthesia Care Team (ACT) model.⁴ Non-physician anesthesia clinicians consist of nurse anesthetists or anesthesiologist assistants. For the past 20 years, Children's National has utilized the ACT model at our main hospital in DC, allowing us to maximize our staffing resources and provide safe and efficient access to anesthesia services for our patients – the majority of whom are Marylanders.

HB 1558 both helps alleviate anesthesia provider workforce shortages and increase access to anesthesia services in Maryland. Since the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been unable to fully open all our operating rooms in Maryland due to ongoing staffing constraints. Currently, 43% of CAAs at Children's National live in Maryland but work in DC. If this bill passes, they would be eager to provide care for kids in Montgomery and Prince George's counties, where our Ambulatory Surgery Centers (ASCs) are located. Allowing CAAs to practice at our Maryland ASCs – as they do every day in DC – would help ensure these sites remain fully operational for Maryland patients and families while expanding our capacity to serve more children each day.

In addition to increasing access to necessary anesthesia care, HB 1558 will create a new career pathway in healthcare for the state. Although the CAA profession has been established for more than 50 years, Maryland has not yet leveraged this highly specialized workforce. This is a unique opportunity because we know that there are Marylanders who were born, raised, and educated in the state who must leave the state every single day to practice as a licensed CAA.

³ [Pediatric Residents' Preparedness and Training Satisfaction: 2015 to 2022 | Pediatrics | American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

⁴ [Statement on the Anesthesia Care Team](#)

We can prevent Maryland from losing opportunities to serve patients to our neighboring states by tapping into an existing talent pool in the state to provide necessary care to Marylanders imminently to help alleviate this critical shortage.

At Children's National, we strongly believe that we need the full range of anesthesia providers – anesthesiologists, nurse anesthetists and certified anesthesiologist assistants to better serve Maryland patients and grow our health workforce. As the region's only standalone Children's Hospital we carry one of the greatest responsibilities in medicine – guiding children safely through some of the most vulnerable and challenging moments of their lives. When a child needs surgery or a complex procedure, families place extraordinary trust in us. We honor that trust by working diligently and safely to ensure the best possible care for our patients, offering expertise and compassion to address their unique medical needs and promote their health and well-being. By utilizing a physician-led anesthesia care team model, we ensure that every child receives safe, timely, and expert care.

I applaud Delegate Woods for introducing this important legislation, which will have life-long benefits for our state's youngest residents and their families and respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 1558. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

For more information, please contact:

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Attachment A

Nurse Anesthetists & Anesthesiologists in Maryland

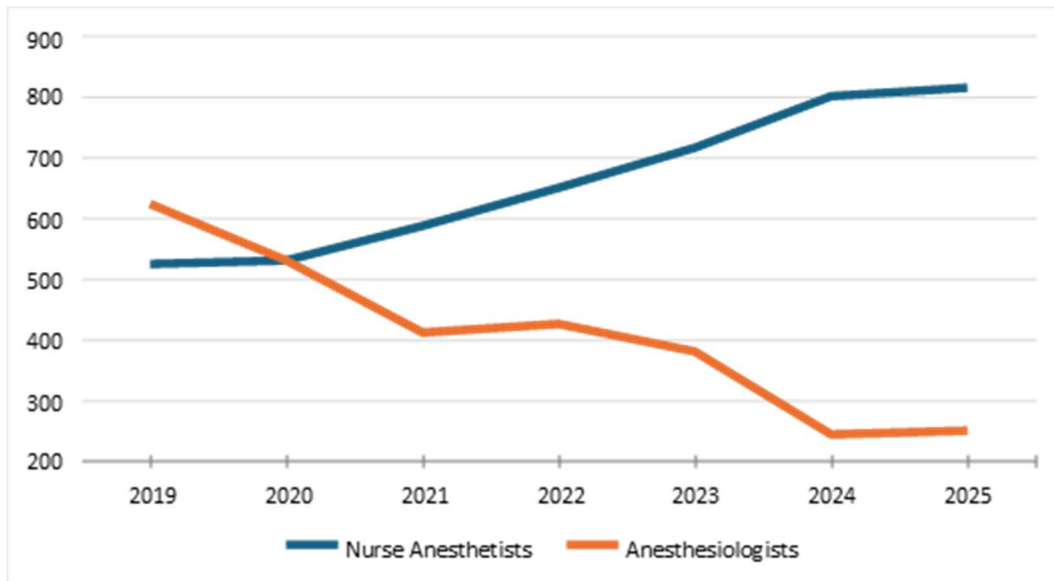
In 2025, Maryland had 815 Nurse Anesthetists and 250 Anesthesiologists. From 2019, employment for Nurse Anesthetists has increased 55%, while employment for Anesthesiologists has declined 60%. See the table and chart below for the changes in employment each year from 2019 to 2025.

Table: Employment for Nurse Anesthetists & Anesthesiologists in Maryland

Occupation	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Nurse Anesthetists	524	530	587	650	716	801	815
Anesthesiologists	624	531	412	426	381	244	250

Source: Lightcast

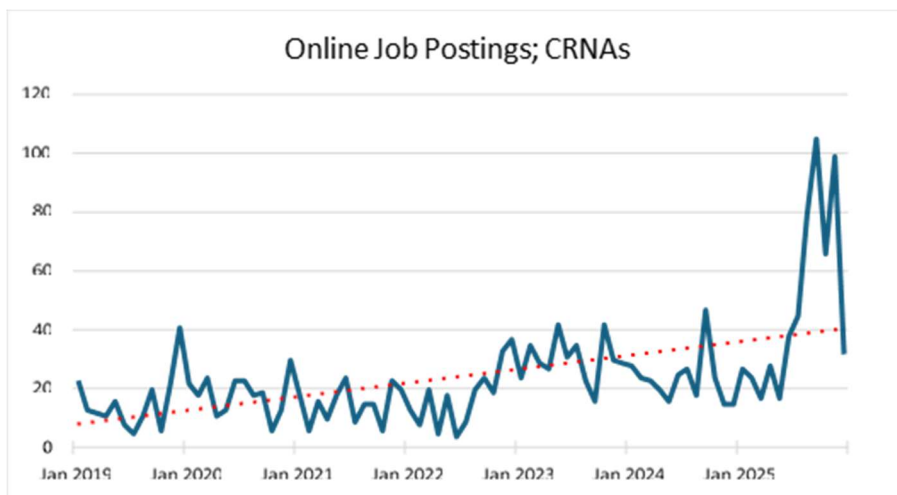
Chart: Employment for Nurse Anesthetists & Anesthesiologists in Maryland



Source: Lightcast

Online job postings data is used to gauge current demand employers have in specific fields. While there's a lag in employment data, online job postings data has a much smaller delay in data reporting. From January 2019 to December 2025, overall job postings in Maryland have increased 2.0%. Job postings data allows the ability to research job titles, while our employment data is limited to occupations (groupings of job titles with similar functions). As a result, included are job postings data for CRNAs. Job postings for CRNAs have increased 39% from Jan 2019 to Dec 2025. Demand for CRNAs outpaces all job postings for the same time period.

Chart: Online Job Postings for CRNAs in Maryland; Jan 2019 to Dec 2025



Source: Lightcast

Employment data shows a decline for Anesthesiologists from 2019 to 2025. Online job posting data shows the opposite. From Jan 2019 to Dec 2025, job postings for Anesthesiologists have increased 367%. This could indicate that the decline in employment/workers for Anesthesiologists resulted in a shortage. The surge in online job postings could indicate employers trying to hire due to the increased need for Anesthesiologists.

Chart: Online Job Postings for Anesthesiologists in Maryland; Jan 2019 to Dec 2025

