

Delegate Heather Bagnall, Chair  
Health Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates  
Taylor House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street, Room 241  
Annapolis, Maryland, 21401

### **House Bill 1558 - State Board of Physicians - Anesthesiologist Assistants – Licensing - Support**

Dear Chair and Members of the Health Committee,

I am writing to express strong support for House Bill 1558, which establishes a comprehensive licensure and regulatory framework for Anesthesiologist Assistants (CAAs) under the Maryland State Board of Physicians. This legislation is essential to strengthen Maryland’s anesthesia workforce, improving patient access to timely surgical and procedural care, and ensuring that our health systems remain resilient and prepared for future demands.

#### **Expanding Access to Safe, High Quality Anesthesia Care**

Maryland continues to experience significant anesthesia workforce shortages across hospitals, ambulatory surgery centers, and procedural environments. House Bill 1558 creates a pathway for CAAs—highly trained, master’s level anesthesia professionals—to practice under the supervision of physician anesthesiologists, as defined in the bill (§145H101–103). CAAs are already integrated into care teams in many states, where they help reduce surgical delays, expand operating room capacity, and improve patient throughput without compromising safety.

#### **Strengthening Workforce Flexibility Across Urban and Rural Settings**

The bill’s supervision structure, including written supervision agreements and clear scope of practice parameters (§145H112–113), allows health systems to deploy CAAs in a flexible, team-based model. This flexibility is especially important for rural and underserved communities, where recruiting anesthesia providers is often difficult. CAAs can help stabilize anesthesia coverage, maintain essential services, and prevent disruptions in care that disproportionately affect smaller hospitals.

#### **Enhancing System Readiness and Surge Capacity**

The COVID19 pandemic highlighted the need for adaptable clinical staffing models. CAAs are trained in advanced airway management, perioperative evaluation, emergency response, and critical intraoperative procedures—all activities explicitly authorized under SB 951 (§145H112). Licensing CAAs would strengthen Maryland’s ability to respond to surges in demand, maintain continuity of operations, and ensure readiness for future public health emergencies.

### **Supporting Maryland's Health Systems with a Modernized Workforce Model**

House Bill 1558 aligns Maryland with national best practices by establishing clear licensure qualifications, including graduation from an accredited program and passage of a national certification exam (§145H107). The bill also provides for temporary and expedited licensure pathways (§145H110–111), enabling Maryland to recruit experienced CAAs from other states and integrate them efficiently into the workforce.

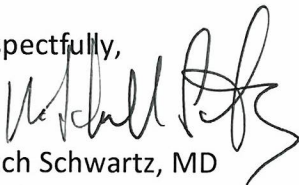
### **Ensuring Patient Safety Through Strong Oversight**

The bill includes robust safeguards, including supervision requirements, limits on concurrent supervision ratios, and detailed disciplinary provisions (§145H113–115). These measures ensure that CAAs practice safely, consistently, and within the anesthesia care team model led by physician anesthesiologists. This structure preserves the highest standards of patient safety while expanding access to care.

### **Addressing Workforce Shortages Without Expanding Independent Practice**

Importantly, SB 951 does **not** authorize independent practice (§145H103). CAAs function exclusively under anesthesiologist supervision, ensuring that Maryland maintains a physician led model of anesthesia care while expanding the team to meet growing demand. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to return a favorable report on House Bill 1558. Establishing licensure for CAAs will expand access, strengthen workforce capacity, support rural and urban hospitals alike, and enhance Maryland's readiness for future healthcare challenges—all while maintaining the highest standards of safety and quality. Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to improving healthcare for all Marylanders.

Respectfully,



Mitch Schwartz, MD  
Chief Physician Executive, Luminis Health