



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 21, 2023

To: The Honorable Benjamin Barnes, Chair, House Appropriations Committee

Re: Letter of Support- House Bill 546- Education - Service Year Option Program - Establishment (Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023)

Dear Chair Barnes:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of House Bill 546.

MHA applauds Governor Moore and Speaker Jones for championing this legislation. Maryland hospitals are at a critical juncture—facing the most significant staffing shortage in recent memory. A 2022 [GlobalData](#) report estimates a statewide shortage of 5,000 full-time registered nurses and 4,000 licensed practical nurses. Without intervention, shortages could double or even triple by 2035. MHA's [2022 State of Maryland's Health Care Workforce report](#) outlines a roadmap to ensure Maryland has the health care workforce now and in the future.

HB 546 aligns with many of the report's recommendations to expand Maryland's workforce pipeline, including stipends or financial incentives to pursue careers in high demand health care fields. We know our health care workforce is impacted by the same social determinants affecting our patients. Mentoring and wraparound supports are vital for students to focus and achieve their educational goals.

Hospital data show high vacancy rates for licensed practical nurses, respiratory therapists, registered nurses, and surgical technicians. One in five—or 18.9%—of nursing assistant positions are currently vacant.¹ Over the past year, Maryland hospitals worked together to address the high demand for certified nursing assistants (CNAs) by creating an acute care CNA pathway. The CNA workforce can grow the nursing pipeline if proper supports are in place for career advancement and administrative barriers are removed, just like this legislation proposes.

For these reasons we ask for a *favorable* report on HB 546.

For more information, please contact:

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¹ MHA Workforce Survey – January 2023