



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 15, 2023

To: The Honorable Guy Guzzone, Chair, Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

Re: Letter of Support- Senate Bill 359 - Community College Tuition and Residency Waivers - Funding

Dear Chair Guzzone:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of Senate Bill 359.

Maryland hospitals are facing the most critical 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 it needs now and into the future. One of the key components is to remove barriers to health care education through tuition assistance, stipends, loan repayment, and other incentives.

SB 359 provides an important pathway to support access to higher education for qualifying Marylanders by funding tuition waivers and residency waivers. The in-county or in-state tuition waivers are available for students enrolled in an instructional program designated as a health manpower shortage program. Many hospital jobs do not require a four-year degree, making our community college partners an important launching pad into the health care workforce.

Registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and nursing assistants, who comprise 39% of the hospital workforce, require a maximum of a two-year degree except for a registered nurse, who can pursue a two-or four-year degree.¹ Other hospital jobs only require a certification, such as a pharmacy technician or patient care technician.

Hospital data show nearly one in five—or 18.9%—of nursing assistant positions are currently vacant.¹ Similar shortages are reported across the care continuum spectrum. SB 359 opens the door to opportunities for Marylanders and has the potential to expand and diversify the health care workforce pipeline.

For these reasons, we request a *favorable* report on SB 359.

For more information, please contact:
Jane Krienke, Senior Legislative Analyst, Government Affairs
Jkrienke@mhaonline.org

¹ MHA Workforce Survey – January 2023