



Maryland
Hospital Association

House Bill 607- Community Colleges - Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship-Requirements

Position: *Support*
February 20, 2024
House Appropriations Committee

MHA Position

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of House Bill 607.

Maryland hospitals continue to experience workforce shortages. Data show high vacancy rates in Maryland hospitals for:

- Surgical technicians, 17.8%
- Licensed practical nurses (LPN), 16.8%
- Nurse practitioners, 12.3%
- Registered nurses (RN), 12.1%
- Radiology technicians, 10.4%

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. The recommendations focus on four areas:

- Expand Maryland's workforce pipeline
- Remove barriers to health care education through tuition assistance, stipends, loan repayment, and other incentives
- Retain the health care workforce
- Leverage talent with new care models

HB 607 would allow applicants enrolled in a noncredit vocational certificate program, enrolled in a sequence of noncredit courses leading to licensure or certification, or participating in a registered apprenticeship program to qualify for the Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship award. This scholarship program provides eligible students with up to \$5,000 to cover tuition and fees after financial aid has been applied. This program helps close financial gaps that can often serve as a barrier to pursuing education.

Last year, MHA launched a digital campaign called [JoinMdHealth](#) to encourage Marylanders to pursue a health care career in Maryland's hospitals. Four out of the five health occupations with the highest vacancy rates in hospitals require certification and licenses that can be obtained through programs offered at Maryland's community colleges.

Creating a pathway for more Marylanders to pursue health care education through the community college can help address the ongoing workforce shortages, help diversify the health care workforce so Maryland's health care workforce reflects the rich diversity of their communities, and promote upward mobility for qualifying students to pursue pathways that lead to higher paying and secure jobs.

HB 607 is a common sense bill that is a win-win for Marylanders.

For all these reasons, we request a *favorable* report on HB 607.

For more information, please contact:
Brandon Floyd, Analyst, Policy
Bfloyd@mhaonline.org