



Maryland  
Hospital Association

March 1, 2024

To: The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Re: Letter of Support - Senate Bill 482 - Governor's Office for Children - Engaging Neighborhoods, Organizations, Unions, Governments, and Households (ENOUGH) Grant Program (ENOUGH Act of 2024)

Dear Chair Feldman:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to support Senate Bill 482. We thank the Governor for prioritizing long-term success for children in historically marginalized communities by focusing on their education and career opportunities. Investing now in targeted, meaningful ways can lay the groundwork to break intergenerational cycles of poverty, violence, and institutional neglect—conditions that can greatly impact the health and well-being of entire communities.

Social determinants of health are defined by the World Health Organization as the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age.<sup>1</sup> Up to 80% of health outcomes can be attributed to these factors. SB 482 establishes the Governor's Office for Children, which will fund interventions to keep children in school and set them up for success with career development pathways—undoing generations of inequities in our communities. The importance of this step cannot be understated. The [National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine](#) “found direct evidence of success in reducing intergenerational poverty in policies and programs addressing five of the seven key drivers [of health]: education; child and maternal health; family income, employment, and wealth; housing and neighborhoods; and neighborhood crime and the criminal justice system.”<sup>2</sup> However, these interventions should not be treated as discrete categories. Social determinants of health are interrelated, thus investments in multiple domains have greater impact. We appreciate the Governor's acknowledgment of a comprehensive approach in defining the Office's scope of work.

These initiatives are also of particular importance for the health care workforce. Requirements for employment in both clinical and non-clinical hospital careers span from graduate-level education to certifications that can be obtained after completing high school. Maryland hospitals are facing the most critical staffing shortage in recent memory. These shortages in turn inhibit access to appropriate levels of care for individuals in underserved communities. 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.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.who.int/health-topics/social-determinants-of-health](http://www.who.int/health-topics/social-determinants-of-health)

<sup>2</sup> [National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine](#)



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MHA's [2022 State of Maryland's Health Care Workforce report](#) recommends, among other things, removing barriers to education to expand and grow a diverse and talented workforce.<sup>3</sup>

For these reasons, we request a *favorable* report on SB 482.

For more information, please contact:  
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<sup>3</sup> [2022 State of Maryland's Health Care Workforce report](#)