



Maryland  
Hospital Association

## **Senate Bill 137- Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship Program Workgroup**

**Position: *Support***

February 13, 2024

Senate Finance 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 Senate Bill 137.

Maryland hospitals continue to experience workforce shortages. RNs, LPNs, and nursing assistants make up 59% of the hospital workforce. The latest data show the positions with the highest vacancy rates in Maryland hospitals are:

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

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 recommendation is to remove barriers to education to expand and grow a diverse and talented workforce. Howard County Community College, for example, launched an [LPN apprenticeship program](#) and surgical technician apprenticeship program and is partnering with local hospitals.<sup>1</sup>

Given the complexities associated with the RN educational pathway, it is essential the work group include industry experts, academia, and the appropriate regulatory and state entities. SB 137 ensures a robust and diverse group of professionals explores this concept fully. Together we can build pathways to stable careers with opportunities for upward economic mobility. In doing so, we can grow our own health care workforce.

For these reasons, we ask for a *favorable* report on SB 137.

For more information, please contact:

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<sup>1</sup> Business Monthly. "[HCC Partners with Hospitals on Apprenticeship Programs.](#)" (Dec. 1, 2022).