



Senate Bill 874- Hospitals and Ambulatory Surgical Facilities – Surgical Technologists

Position: *Oppose*
March 7, 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 on Senate Bill 874. SB 874 would prohibit hospitals and ambulatory surgical centers from hiring a surgical tech who has not completed a specified program.

Surgical technologists, also called operating room technicians, work alongside and assist surgeons, nurses, and other members of the health care team throughout a surgical operation. They are responsible for keeping the environment in an operating room sterile and well-organized. They need to make sure all are present for the surgery, and accounted for after the surgery is done. Their common tasks and duties can be split into three phases: before the operation (preoperative), during the surgical operation (intraoperative), and after the operation (postoperative).

Prospective surgical techs currently have multiple ways to enter the profession. There are programs at community colleges, vocational schools, universities, hospitals, workforce intermediary programs like EARN, high schools, and the military. Having multiple options to enter the health care workforce enables those with different life experiences to become a successful part of a health care team. The jobs are also often the beginning of a pathway to higher level jobs or specialization.

Today, hospitals are experiencing a surgical tech vacancy rate of 18%– the highest vacancy rate across the hospital workforce. Narrowing options to enter the surgical tech profession would worsen vacancies and likely to limit opportunities for individuals wanting to enter the health care workforce.

Addressing Maryland's health care workforce shortages requires creative solutions that meet people where they are as they enter the workforce, ensure all providers are practicing at the top of their license, and creating career pathways. Limiting entry options for surgical techs is counterproductive to these initiatives.

For these reasons, we ask for an *unfavorable* report on SB 874.

For more information, please contact:
Pegeen Townsend, Consultant
Ptownsend@mhaonline.org