



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 17, 2022

To: The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair, Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee

Re: Letter of Support - Senate Bill 523 - Occupations and Professions - Licenses, Certificates, Registration - Immigrants

Dear Chair Pinsky:

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 523.

Hospitals in Maryland and across the nation faced staffing burdens even before the COVID-19 pandemic and this latest surge. Maryland hospitals now have over 3,900 nursing vacancies—a 50% jump since late August.

Registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and nursing assistants comprise 52% of the Maryland hospital workforce but have employee turnover rates of nearly 10%, the highest rate among all staff categories. Nursing and medical positions (RNs, NPs, MDs, etc.) have employee vacancy rates of 25.4%—an increase of nearly 48% in 2021 alone. Overall hospital employee vacancies rose nearly 34% statewide in 2021.

This challenge is not unique to Maryland. The American Hospital Association reports job postings for nurses are up 45% nationwide since January 2020 and 41% for other clinical staff.^[1] The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics expects 500,000 more nurses will leave the workforce this year—bringing the national shortage to 1.1 million nurses.^[2]

These vacancies mean fewer caregivers at the bedside, limiting capacity to care for patients, both those with COVID-19 and those having other serious conditions such as cancer. SB 523 aims to ensure every qualified health care professional can obtain a license to practice in Maryland.

The health care workforce crisis was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, however it will continue long after the surges end. Any attempt to increase the number of health care professionals available in the state should be supported.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB 523.

For more information, please contact:
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^[1] American Hospital Association. (January, 2022). "[Data Brief: Workforce Issues Remain at the Forefront of Pandemic-related Challenges for Hospitals.](#)"

^[2] American Nurses Association. (n.d.). "[Workforce.](#)"