



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

January 21, 2021

Senate Bill 307: Labor and Employment - Direct Care Workforce Innovation Program
Written Testimony Only

POSITION: SUPPORT

On behalf of the members of the Health Facilities Association of Maryland (HFAM), we appreciate the opportunity to express our support for Senate Bill 307. HFAM represents over 170 skilled nursing centers and assisted living communities in Maryland, as well as nearly 80 associate businesses that offer products and services to healthcare providers. Our members provide services and employ individuals in nearly every jurisdiction in the state and provide the majority of long-term and post-acute care to Marylanders in need.

Senate Bill 307 would establish the Direct Care Workforce Innovation Program to provide matching grants to eligible entities to create and expand on successful recruitment and retention strategies that address the range of potential barriers to increasing the number of direct care workers with the goal of ensuring the availability of trained direct care workers across the state.

Workforce development, recruitment, and retention of both direct and indirect workers across all healthcare settings was important before the COVID-19 pandemic and now is even more critical.

For years, in Maryland and across the nation, healthcare settings have faced staffing shortages in a range of roles from physicians and nursing aides to housekeeping and dietary workers. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenging workforce shortages. While no single piece of legislation will solve this ongoing crisis, Senate Bill 307 provides expanded grant opportunities and partnerships for direct care workforce recruitment and retention in healthcare settings, which is an excellent and important start.

Additionally, we often find ourselves focused on public policy problems or most recently enormous healthcare and economic challenges brought on by the ongoing pandemic. This bill reminds us of the opportunity we share to train direct care workers for a rewarding profession and the earning that comes with it, to lay the groundwork for that individual to build upon their skill set and advance their career in healthcare, and the familial and community impact that comes with it.

For these reasons we request a favorable report from the Committee on Senate Bill 307.

Submitted by:

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