



Maryland Community Health System

Committee:	Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Bill Number:	SB 716 – Maryland Health Care Workers Loan Assistance Program – Establishment and Funding
Hearing Date:	March 10, 2022
Position:	Support

Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) supports *Senate Bill 716 – Maryland Health Care Workers Loan Assistance Program – Establishment and Funding*. This bill creates the Maryland Health Care Workers Loan Program. The Program will provide \$10,000 for students to repay health care related education loans.

MCHS is a network of federally qualified health centers focused on providing somatic, behavioral, and dental health services to underserved communities. Through the course of the pandemic, MCHS facilities have remained open to support and provide essential care to the 240,606 patients we serve in communities most in need. This could not have been done without our hardworking and steadfast health care workers.

Federally qualified health centers already struggle with recruiting and retaining staff and ensuring we have sufficient providers to meet the demand, especially in our rural communities. We also recognize the financial burden associated with obtaining a health care education which may deter potential students from pursuing health care related degrees. Student loan debt for a health care related education can run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. By providing a \$10,000 repayment for student loan debt for health care education programs, more students are encouraged to pursue these heroic and essential fields. Our centers simply need health care providers to serve our communities and that cannot be done without educating future Marylanders.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Suhani Chitalia at schitalia@policypartners.net.

