



Maryland
Hospital Association

**Senate Bill 440 - Commission to Study the Health Care Workforce Crisis in Maryland -
Establishment**

Position: *Support*

February 10, 2022

Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee

MHA Position

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 440

Our hospital heroes have been there for Marylanders, serving more than 700 days on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. We're coming out of what was perhaps the most harrowing month of this public health crisis since its earliest days.

In January, there were more new cases of COVID-19 than in the previous 10 months combined. A spike in hospitalizations—2,603 COVID inpatients per day on average—pushed hospitals and their already overburdened workforces beyond limits. As a result, 15 hospitals, one-third of the state's acute care hospitals, were compelled to operate under crisis standards of care.

Workforce shortages are at crisis levels with a staggering 50% jump in hospital nurse vacancies in just five months. That means 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. However, these workforce shortages are not new.

Senate Bill 440 establishes a commission of key policy makers throughout the state to examine the root cause of the state's health workforce crisis. This type of multiagency approach is essential to find solutions. Should this legislation pass, the hospital industry is ready to engage with the Commission and other stakeholders to strengthen our state's health care workforce.

We look forward to working with the sponsor and other advocates on this legislation and urge a *favorable* report on SB 440.

For more information, please contact:
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