



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
HOUSE HEALTH AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE**

February 1, 2022

House Bill 276: Health Occupations - Clinical Nurse Specialists - Prescribing Authority
Written Testimony Only

POSITION: Favorable

On behalf of the members of the Health Facilities Association of Maryland (HFAM), we appreciate the opportunity to express our support for House Bill 276. 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.

House Bill 276 defines a “clinical nurse specialist” and “practice as a clinical nurse specialist” for the purpose of authorizing a clinical nurse specialist to prescribe drugs and durable medical equipment under regulations adopted by the State Board of Nursing. This legislation also alters the definition of an “authorized prescriber” to include clinical nurse specialists, and authorizes a licensed physician to personally prepare and dispense a prescription written by a clinical nurse specialist.

Allowing clinical nurse specialists, as defined in this legislation, to have prescriptive authority can give these nurses the ability to positively impact the quality of healthcare delivery for the people that they serve. Patients and residents can receive faster access to treatments, improved communications, greater efficiency, and cost effectiveness. Nurses are often more directly involved in day-to-day care and thus are more likely to involve patients in the decision-making process about their care.

Across healthcare settings in Maryland and throughout the country, we are fighting this most recent surge of the COVID-19 pandemic with fewer people working in healthcare, and particularly fewer people working in skilled nursing and rehabilitation centers. Workforce recruitment and retention was a challenge before the pandemic and it has only grown more challenging over the last two years.

Tens of thousands of healthcare workers in Maryland have left the field since the start of the pandemic. Licensed healthcare professionals are scarce and all healthcare settings are competing for employees from the same labor pool. Given the workforce crisis we face, it is imperative that we ensure continued access to care and treatment from qualified professionals.

For these reasons, we request a favorable report from the Committee on House Bill 276.

Submitted by:

Joseph DeMattos, Jr.
President and CEO
(410) 290-5132