



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

March 8, 2023

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: HB 1160 – Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program and Advisory Committee – Establishment – Letter of Information

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of information for House Bill (HB) - 1160 - Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program and Advisory Committee – Establishment. HB 1160 establishes the Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program in MDH to provide financial assistance for tuition and other support services for certified nursing assistants in licensed practical nursing (LPN) educational programs who intend to practice as LPNs or continue on to become registered nurses (RN).

MDH is not the appropriate state agency for programs that focus on career development, higher education programming, and direct financial assistance. The requirements of this bill are more appropriate for the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) and the Maryland Department of Labor (DoL). Specifically, MHEC administers financial awards through the Workforce Shortage Student Assistance Grant Program for students who plan to work in specific career programs, including nursing.¹ DoL administers the Career Pathways for Health Care Workers Program, established by Senate Bill 518 (2022), to provide matching grants to employers for training programs attended by health care workers.²

If enacted as drafted, this bill will have a significant fiscal and operational impact on MDH. MDH will need to establish new workflows, program operations, and hire at least four full-time employees to fulfill the minimum requirements of this legislation. This new program in the MDH will be responsible for the creation and management of the Advisory Committee, implementing the Pilot program, designing a fiscal system to process individual financial assistance, promulgating policies and regulations, and overseeing the drafting and submission of required reports.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Megan Peters, Acting Director of Governmental Affairs at megan.peters@maryland.gov or (410) 260-3190.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary

¹ https://mhec.maryland.gov/preparing/Pages/FinancialAid/ProgramDescriptions/prog_WSSAG.aspx

² <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgaweb/Legislation/Details/sb0518/?ys=2022rs>