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BILL NO.: **HB 354**

TITLE: Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program and Advisory
Committee – Establishment

SPONSOR: Delegate Cullison

COMMITTEE: Health & Government Operations

POSITION: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

DATE: February 6, 2024

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS WITH AMENDMENTS** House Bill 354 – Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program and Advisory Committee – Establishment. This legislation would create a statewide program that provides a pathway to career in health care for Maryland residents.

Baltimore County is proud to operate the Public Health Pathways Pilot program, a comprehensive program that provides a pathway to family-sustaining wages and a career in healthcare for under employed residents. In addition to free tuition, fees, books, and uniforms, our Public Health pathways program offers a customized school and work schedule, mentors and tutors, and a monthly stipend that allow our participants to address workforce barriers like housing and food instability. In one year of operating, 100% of program participants received their Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certification- significantly higher than the typical 75-80% completion rate. 100% of program participants were hired as full time CNAs will full benefits by the University of Maryland Medical System.

Before the Public Health Pathways pilot program, most program participants faced housing and income insecurity. With the monthly stipend and guaranteed full time employment, program participants are now making approximately \$3,500 a month and have full benefits including health insurance, paid time off, and retirement plans. Baltimore County is confident that the success of this program can be applied to a statewide program. Baltimore County supports the amendments proposed by Delegate Cullison to better this bill.

Accordingly, Baltimore County urges a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on HB 354. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.