



Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Mid-Atlantic States, Inc
2101 East Jefferson Street
Rockville, Maryland 20852

February 6, 2024

The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk
Health and Government Operations Committee
House Office Building Room 240
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB 354 – Support

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Committee:

Kaiser Permanente is pleased to support HB 354, “Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program and Advisory Committee - Establishment.”

Kaiser Permanente is the largest private integrated health care delivery system in the United States, delivering health care to over 12 million members in eight states and the District of Columbia.¹ Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States, which operates in Maryland, provides and coordinates complete health care services for over 825,000 members. In Maryland, we deliver care to approximately 475,000 members.

The nursing profession is facing persistent workforce shortages, exacerbated by factors such as an aging population, increased healthcare needs, and retirements within the current nursing workforce. A Pathways to Nursing Program provides a strategic solution by streamlining the education and training process, enabling more individuals to enter the profession quickly and efficiently. This program facilitates a faster response to the growing healthcare demands.

Diversity in the nursing workforce is essential for providing culturally competent and patient-centered care. This program encourages individuals from diverse backgrounds, including underrepresented minorities and non-traditional students, to pursue a nursing career. By actively recruiting and supporting candidates from various ethnic, socioeconomic, and educational backgrounds, this program contributes to a more inclusive and representative nursing workforce.

A Pathways to Nursing Program contributes to reducing healthcare disparities by increasing the number of culturally competent and community-focused nurses. Graduates from diverse backgrounds are more likely to understand and address the unique healthcare needs of underserved communities, ultimately improving health outcomes and promoting equity within the healthcare system.

¹ Kaiser Permanente comprises Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc., the nation’s largest not-for-profit health plan, and its health plan subsidiaries outside California and Hawaii; the not-for-profit Kaiser Foundation Hospitals, which operates 39 hospitals and over 650 other clinical facilities; and the Permanente Medical Groups, self-governed physician group practices that exclusively contract with Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and its health plan subsidiaries to meet the health needs of Kaiser Permanente’s members.

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For these reasons, we urge a favorable report for HB 354. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please feel free to contact me at Allison.W.Taylor@kp.org or (202) 924-7496 with questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Allison Taylor".

Allison Taylor
Director of Government Relations
Kaiser Permanente