

TESTIMONY

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

SB 928 – Task Force to Study the Nurse Shortage in Maryland

Tina Bjarekull, President

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MEMBERS

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Johns Hopkins University

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Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of SB 928—Task Force to Study the Nurse Shortage in Maryland. This bill provides an important opportunity for the State to conduct a systematic analysis of nursing shortages in Maryland, to study changing needs in the profession, and to strengthen the State's capacity to meet these demands.

Five of MICUA's 13 member campuses offer nursing programs: Hood College, Johns Hopkins University, Notre Dame of Maryland University, Stevenson University, and Washington Adventist University. Currently, these five institutions award 47% of all nursing degrees in the State at the bachelor's level and above. Four of these institutions have been awarded Nurse Support Program (NSP) II grants from the State, which focus on expanding the capacity of nursing education programs at Maryland colleges and universities.

Collectively, MICUA institutions address multiple points in the nursing education pipeline—from doctoral-level programs that prepare future nursing faculty and researchers; to master-level programs that prepare nurse practitioners, specialists, and administrators; to bachelor-level programs that prepare registered nurses. MICUA institutions have been responsive to educational developments in the nursing profession, such as the Institute of Medicine's *Future of Nursing* report, calling for 80% of the nation's registered nurses to hold a bachelor's degree by 2020. These initiatives include the development of RN-to-BSN (Bachelor of Science in Nursing) programs that serve associate's degree holders who are nurses in Maryland, and the creation of articulation agreements with nursing programs at Maryland community colleges.

Despite the availability of nationally-ranked nursing programs, innovative recruitment and retention efforts, and accessible educational options in Maryland, nursing shortages still persist. Among the challenges facing Maryland's nursing programs are shortages in qualified nursing faculty and limited practicum placements for nursing students in hospitals and other

clinical settings. SB 928 will position the State to examine these issues—and others—collaboratively and systematically.

MICUA looks forward to identifying representatives from our member institutions to serve on this Task Force, along with members of the General Assembly, nursing professionals, and colleagues from the public two-year and four-year higher education segments. Given our major investment and commitment to preparing and graduating nurses in Maryland, we also look forward to reviewing the findings and recommendations from the Task Force, and continuing our efforts to expand educational opportunities and support for the State's nursing workforce.

For these reasons, MICUA urges a favorable report for SB 928.