



Maryland
Hospital Association

January 23, 2024

To: The Honorable Joseline Peña-Melnyk, Chair, House Health & Government Operations Committee

Re: Letter of Support with Amendments- House Bill 55 - Maryland Commission on Veterans and Military Families

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 62 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of House Bill 55.

Maryland hospitals are experiencing historic workforce shortages, with one in every five nurse positions vacant. A 2022 [GlobalData](#) report estimates a statewide shortage of 5,000 full-time registered nurses and 4,000 licensed practical nurses. Without intervention, shortages could double or even triple by 2035. MHA's [2022 State of Maryland's Health Care Workforce report](#) outlines a roadmap to ensure Maryland has the health care workforce it needs now and into the future.

The report recommends Maryland leverage the state's military bases by launching a "Green to Blue" campaign to help discharged and retired military personnel with caregiver experience work in hospitals. We must invite every qualified health care worker to join the workforce. This includes our service members who have valuable training and experience. Easing the transition to working in a civilian capacity would benefit the entire health care system.

House Bill 55 would create a Commission to develop and implement a strategic plan to make Maryland an attractive state for veterans and military families. We recommend adding a representative with experience in workforce development, such as a member of the Governor's Workforce Development Board, and a representative with experience in health care careers and/or education. We also suggest the Commission explore how to reduce barriers to education and careers to help service members and their families transition into civilian roles. This is particularly important for careers in high-need industries like health care.

This bill could help ensure Maryland does not lose qualified health care workers with valuable experience to neighboring states.

For these reasons, we request a *favorable* report on HB 55.

For more information, please contact:

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