

# Investing in the Heart of Healthcare: Hospital Employees Retraining Program



## Legislation Goal:

**Senate Bill 379** builds on Maryland’s current authority to establish a “Hospital Employees Retraining Program” for the retraining and placement of hospital employees who are unemployed or may become unemployed as a result of the closing, delicensing, downsizing, or possible downsizing of a hospital or merging of hospitals.

### This bill would do three things:

1. Apply the law to freestanding medical facility conversions.
2. Specify the types of transition and support services for which the fund can be utilized.
3. Require the filing of an economic impact statement for closures, mergers, conversions or delicensing.

## Problem:

Maryland is in the midst of the tremendous task of transforming our healthcare delivery system. The Legislature recently determined that such a transformation requires significant financial investments to transform both technical and physical infrastructure.

However, human capital investment in our own healthcare delivery workforce needs to be commensurate to the efforts already taken in capital and technological transformation.



Some forward thinking healthcare providers currently contribute to the training and upgrading of frontline caregivers, such as community health workers and asthma educators. But those investments are not to the scale needed to ensure that the

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workers who deliver care in today's healthcare settings will be prepared and certified to continue delivering care in the new All-Payer Model's settings of tomorrow, such as in nursing homes with increased acuity needs or outpatient clinics.

## **Solution:**

To ensure that funds are invested in workforce development at the scale needed to meet our waiver goals, we recommend investments in the Hospital Employees Retraining Program for training funding as well as to leverage federal and private funds to prepare the people delivering healthcare to transition up the healthcare career ladder.

### **Examples of Qualifying Uses of Funding:**

- Developing readjustment plans for individuals;
- Assessment of skills and aptitudes;
- Retraining;
- Support services that enable workers to participate in an employment and training program, such as: family care assistance, child care, commuting assistance, emergency housing and rental assistance, counseling assistance, emergency health assistance, and emergency financial assistance



## **Current Law:**

Beginning in 1985, the Legislature established a program titled the "Hospital Employees Retraining Program" for the retraining and placement of hospital employees who are unemployed or may become unemployed as a result of the closing, delicensing, downsizing, or possible downsizing of a hospital or merging of hospitals. Hospitals are mandated to pay a fee, not exceeding 0.01 percent of the gross operating revenue for the year preceding their closure or delicensing. To date, there is no evidence that funds have been allocated to this program.

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