

Career Pathways for Health Care Workers Program

Sponsors: Delegate Turner & Senator Augustine

SB 518

The Career Pathways for Health Care Workers Program would provide matching grants to employers to pay for training programs that upskill the existing workforce. Training programs would be offered through Historically Black Colleges and Universities or community colleges.

Problem: Maryland is facing a healthcare staffing crisis that has been exacerbated by COVID-19 pandemic.

- Maryland is one of four states that will experience a shortage of over 10,000 nurses by 2025.¹
- A 2018 study of direct care service in Maryland by PHI – commissioned before the pandemic wreaked further havoc on the healthcare industry -- found that by 2024, Maryland would need to increase the number of direct care givers by 40% to meet the needs of our state.²
- Maryland's health and human services programs, which employs various fields of healthcare workers, has a vacancy rise from 7 percent back in 2010 to 12 percent in 2019. Vacancies in direct care positions have doubled from 7 to 14 percent between 2014 and 2018.³
- Healthcare delivery is undergoing a rapid transformation in Maryland, driven in part by our State's Total Cost of Care Model. Our model encourages hospitals to eliminate unnecessary hospitalizations, while coordinating care with other kinds of providers to focus on more patient-centered outcomes. This model is creating a shift in the kinds of training and certifications workers need to provide the best levels of care to Maryland patients and consumers. Both nurses and nursing workers increasingly need additional certifications and training to provide the appropriate levels of care to patients.²
- The evolution of these career requirements has occurred just as nurses and nursing workers are leaving these fields of work because of staffing shortages and low wages.³
- The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this crisis, as nursing healthcare workers risk their lives to care for an ever-increasing number of patients.

Solution: Maryland must fund training programs that will build a robust healthcare workforce to meet the growing and changing needs of our residents.

- This bill would create a fund for employers to apply for matching grants to pay for training programs that upskill the existing workforce.
- Workers would be placed by their employers directly into training programs that would be offered through Historically Black Colleges and Universities or community colleges.
- Workers would benefit by being placed into training programs offered by Maryland's colleges and universities, directly through their employers.
- By creating a career pathway program, the State could mitigate the need for the current and future healthcare workforce demand.

¹ <https://www.nursing.umaryland.edu/media/umb/umson-mnwc/Health-Care-Workforce-Report-FINAL-Jan-2019.pdf>

² DSWorkers-Maryland-2018-PHI (1).pdf

³ Maryland is Experiencing one of its Worst Nurse Shortages in State History According to Reports - Baltimore Post-Examiner [Baltimore Post-Examiner \(baltimorepostexaminer.com\)](https://www.baltimorepostexaminer.com) -

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