

Memo

To: Members, House Education Committee
From: Adam Carlson, Senior Vice President, Advocacy
Date: Nov. 30, 2021
Re: HB's 5556 and 5557
Position: Support

The Michigan Health & Hospital Association (MHA) supports House Bill (HB's) 5556 and 5557, sponsored by Reps. John Roth (R - Traverse City) and John Damoose (R- Harbor Springs). These bills would help address hospital staffing issues and increase access to careers in healthcare by allowing community colleges to offer 4-year baccalaureate degrees in nursing.

The nursing shortage in Michigan has been exacerbated over the last two years due to the ongoing pandemic. There are currently more than 20,692 open healthcare positions in Michigan, totaling to an average hospital staff vacancy rate of 14.3%. The turnover rate has climbed to 26.4%, and approximately 1,139 frontline staff leave hospital work every month. The shortage has continued to get worse during 2021, despite Michigan hospitals adopting aggressive employer strategies to recruit and incentivize applicants with increased pay and retention benefits. The MHA believes HB's 5556 and 5557 will help address that issue in the long-term, particularly in the areas most in need.

Currently, all of Michigan's community colleges offer an associate degree in nursing. However, given the changing nature of the industry, the entry-level requirement for nursing is moving from an Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) to a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN). While some nursing students can complete their BSN degree at a community college due to various partnerships established with community colleges and universities across the state, this legislation will increase access to high quality nurses in some of Michigan's smaller and rural areas where a four-year school does not currently exist. Passing these bills could also encourage hospitals to forge partnerships with local community colleges to establish a pipeline of trained nurses, further reducing the nursing shortage in areas of need moving forward.

The MHA believes that all Michigan nurses should be prepared in programs which meet the educational and professional standards of the nursing profession. While recognizing that the achievement of a BSN degree may occur through a number of educational tracks including generic BSNs and RN to BSN completion programs, the quality and national nursing accreditation of the BSN degree is more

Brian Peters, Chief Executive Officer

important than where the program is provided. HB's 5556 and 5557 will ensure that quality by requiring that community colleges pursue and maintain accreditation for their program from the Commission of Collegiate Nursing Education or its successor organizations. We urge members to support this important legislation.

Please contact Adam Carlson (acarlson@mha.org) at the MHA if you have further questions on this issue.