



MICHIGAN HEALTH & HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

Advocating for hospitals and the patients they serve.

TO: Members of the Senate Education Committee

FROM: Chris Mitchell, Director, Government Relations

DATE: November 30, 2011

SUBJECT: House Bill 4496 Community College Authority to Grant Baccalaureate Degrees in Applied Technical Areas

MHA Position: **SUPPORT**

The Michigan Health & Hospital Association (MHA) supports House Bill (HB) 4496 sponsored by Speaker Pro Tempore John Walsh (R-Livonia) which would allow community colleges to grant baccalaureate degrees in nursing, cement technology, maritime technology and culinary arts. HB 4496 as passed the House of Representatives requires community colleges to offer Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degrees specifically. This is important as about 4000 qualified nursing students are currently turned away due to a lack of classroom space at Michigan's universities.

Currently, all 28 Michigan community colleges offer an associates degree in nursing. However, given the changing nature of the industry the entry level requirement for nursing is moving from the Associates Degree in Nursing (RN) to the BSN. While some community colleges can complete their BSN degree at a community college due to various partnerships established with community colleges and universities across the state, the MHA believes that the legislation could potentially increase access to high quality nurses in some of Michigan's smaller and rural areas where a 4-year school does not currently exist. Passage of this legislation also could assist hospitals to forge partnerships with local community colleges to establish a pipeline of trained nurses, which could help reduce the current nursing shortage.

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 important than where the program is provided. In order for this proposal to be successful, the community colleges must offer the same high quality BSN degree that is offered at the state's four-year universities. We urge you to support House Bill 4496.**

Please contact Chris Mitchell (cmitchell@mha.org) at (517) 703-8622 at the MHA if you have further questions on this issue.

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