

MEMORANDUM

TO: House Health Policy Committee
FROM: Richie Farran, V.P. of Government Services, Health Care Association of Michigan
DATE: July 31, 2019
SUBJECT: House Bill 4098

HCAM expresses support for House Bill 4098, currently before the Committee on Health Policy. This bill serves the dual purpose of enhancing resident safety and addressing workforce issues experienced by Michigan's nursing facilities.

Facilities are currently facing a shortage of licensed nurses to serve residents. The use of certified nurse aides, who are on the front line of care, help alleviate the impact of the nursing shortage to the benefit of both residents and staff.

House Bill 4098 will increase this support staff by providing for the training and registration of medication aides. The legislation closely mirrors the statutory framework in place for a certified nurse aide (CNA), and would allow a CNA to complete additional education and testing to become a medication aide. Responsibilities of medication aides would include administering regularly scheduled medication under the supervision of a registered nurse. The legislation clarifies that medication aides would not be permitted to administer controlled substances, medications in injectable forms, or the initial administration of medications. The core duties of nursing will remain with the nurses in the facility – medication aides will simply offer further support to nursing staff to help provide residents with the care they need.

Medication aides are used in several states, where the results have been positive for residents and facilities. In Washington, the medication aide program has resulted in improved medication error rates, staff satisfaction, and patient safety. Furthermore, the increased training and responsibilities bring a pay increase, and provide for another step along the career ladder for these health care workers.

The use of medication aides has shown to be beneficial for the entire sector. As Michigan's aging population increases, it is important that the health care settings that will serve their needs are well-staffed and able to provide quality care. This bill will allow Michigan nursing facilities to provide the necessary care to Michigan seniors. HCAM offers its support for HB 4098, and respectfully requests a hearing.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this legislation, please do not hesitate to contact me at 517-627-1561 or via email at RichFarran@hcam.org. Your time and consideration are much appreciated.

HCAM is a statewide trade association representing proprietary, not for profit, county medical and hospital-based long-term skilled nursing and rehabilitation facilities.