

alzheimer's association®

Position of the Alzheimer's Association Greater Maryland and National Capital Area Chapters

On

SB 966 - Health Facilities - Assisted Living Programs - Referrals and Licenses

Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Chairwoman Kelley and Vice Chair Feldman,

My name is Eric Colchamiro, and I am the Director of Government Affairs for the Alzheimer's Association. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of SB 966, legislation which improves the referral and licensing program for assisted living programs in Maryland.

This legislation, if passed, would improve the quality of care at assisted living facilities. It would authorize the Attorney General to—in certain situations where an individual knowingly operates, maintains, or owns an assisted living program without a license—attain injunctive relief which requires the person to immediately cease operating the program, and prohibit them from operating, maintaining, or owning a program in the future. It also says that a person may not knowingly refer a person to a program operating without a license. It enacts civil penalties for these unlawful referrals, and requires assisted living referrers to register with Maryland's Office of Healthcare Quality.

The Alzheimer's Association is an active member of the Oversight Committee on Quality of Care in Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities. Alzheimer's and related dementia require a wide range of evolving care and services, and as the disease advances, individuals often need to move into residential settings for more specialized care. In fact, among individuals with Alzheimer's, 75 percent will be admitted to a nursing home by the age of 80. It is important that state governments have in place laws to protect people with dementia from improper displacement in residential settings, such as assisted living facilities. State governments must also increase Medicaid reimbursement rates to reflect the higher cost of care for individuals living with Alzheimer's and other dementias to ensure residential care settings remain accessible to the population and their needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important legislation.

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