

**Testimony before House Appropriations Committee  
February 25, 2020**

**Support of House Bill 564  
Department of Aging - Assisted Living Program Subsidies - Determinations**

**\*\*Support\*\***

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, Maryland Chapter (NASW-MD), we would like to express our support for HB 564 - Department of Aging-Assisted Living Program Subsidies – Determinations.

By 2030, 25.4% of Maryland’s population will be 60 or older, with ages 80-84 comprising the fastest growing group. Though many would prefer to remain in their homes as they age, an increasing percentage will need to consider a transition to an Assisted Living community.

The Genworth Cost of Care 2019 survey puts the national average monthly price of Assisted Living communities at \$4051. The average cost in Maryland is \$3750 (close to \$45,000 a year). There are few public resources available for those seniors who will need the level of care an Assisted Living community provides. The cost is simply prohibitive for many Maryland seniors.

Discharge planners in hospitals and Social Workers in short term rehabilitation programs work tirelessly to put a good, safe discharge plan in place. It is difficult enough for elders to accept the need to transition to an Assisted Living community. When it becomes apparent there are few communities available due to a senior’s limited financial resources, the result is anguish for those seniors and their families who are not sure what they will do. Assisted Living programs provide an alternative to more costly institutional care. When Assisted Living support is needed but not financially possible, seniors may return home with an inadequate discharge plan in place, opening the possibility of bad outcomes such as rehospitalizations, readmissions to skilled nursing facilities, an increased likelihood for falls, isolation and a general decline in functioning.

The current Assisted Living subsidy is far less than the cost of even modest Assisted Living communities. Raising the subsidy to \$1,000 would allow for more low-income seniors to have Assisted Living as an option for care as well as encourage more Assisted Living communities to participate in the subsidy program.

Older Marylanders have contributed enormously to the strength and prosperity of our communities. We owe it to them to increase the Assisted Living subsidy so low-income seniors can have the care and dignity they deserve.

We urge you to vote YES on HB 564.

Thank you,  
NASW-MD Committee on Aging