



Larry Hogan | Governor Boyd K. Rutherford | Lt. Governor Rona E. Kramer | Secretary

DATE: February 25, 2020
BILL NUMBER: HB564
COMMITTEE: Appropriations
BILL TITLE: Department of Aging – Assisted Living Program Subsidies – Determinations
POSITION: Letter of Information

Thank you for this opportunity to provide information regarding HB564/SB670 – Department of Aging – Assisted Living Program Subsidies – Determinations. The Maryland Department of Aging (MDoA) appreciates the intent of this legislation and the consideration given to support the department’s Senior Assisted Living Group Home Subsidy (SALGHS) program.

The Department of Aging agrees that changes to the SALGHS program are necessary in order for this program to best serve Maryland’s older adult residents. As such, the Department has been working closely for the past year with our partners at the local level who administer this program to evaluate the program and recommend regulation changes to improve the program, including an increase in the subsidy.

Substantial time and effort, both by state and local Area Agency on Aging (AAA) personnel, have been dedicated to the proposed regulation changes. In summary:

- **February 6, 2019:** Meeting with Maryland Association of Area Agencies on Aging (M4A) at MDoA to discuss SALGHS.
- **February 28, 2019:** Follow up letter from M4A highlighting proposed changes.
- **July 10, 2019:** Meeting with Baltimore County AAA to discuss SALGHS subsidy.
- **October 15, 2019:** Meeting at Anne Arundel County to discuss SALGHS subsidy.
- **October 28, 2019:** Meeting with Washington County to discuss SALGHS subsidy.
- **November 19, 2019:** Meeting at Montgomery County to discuss SALGHS subsidy.
- **November 27, 2019:** MDoA email requesting AAA input for SALGHS program proposed regulation and policy changes. All 16 SALGHS providers responded to the survey.
- **December 2019:** Calls with Allegany, Carroll, Frederick, Howard, and Prince George’s county SALGHS program coordinators to discuss SALGHS subsidy.
- **January 10, 2020:** Meeting with Upper Shore to discuss SALGHS subsidy.

As you can see, we have been working closely with our local partners to make the necessary regulation changes to this program, including an increase in the subsidy. At the core of these changes is local flexibility. We appreciate the diversity of our State. For instance, the needs in Allegany County are not the same as those in Montgomery. **When asked for their input on these regulations, 88% of AAAs responded**

that they did not want to be forced to raise the subsidy and would prefer the flexibility to do so only if they decide it is in the best interest of their local program. Implementing a fixed subsidy for the entire state will cause hardship to the jurisdictions that are currently fully utilizing the SALGHS program; whereas, the Department's proposed regulations satisfy the needs of all jurisdictions.

It would be the Department's preference to be able to enact all of these recommended changes simultaneously via regulation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.