



6811 Campfield Road
Baltimore, MD 21207

TO: Finance Committee
FROM: LeadingAge Maryland
SUBJECT: Senate Bill 642, Home- and Community-Based Waiver Services - Alterations and Task Force
DATE: March 3, 2020
POSITION: **Favorable**

LeadingAge Maryland supports Senate Bill 642, Home- and Community-Based Waiver Services - Alterations and Task Force.

LeadingAge Maryland is a community of not-for-profit aging services organizations serving residents and clients through continuing care retirement communities, affordable senior housing, assisted living, nursing homes and home and community-based services. Our mission is to expand the world of possibilities for aging in Maryland. We have nearly 80 affordable housing communities as members. We partner with consumers, caregivers, researchers, public agencies, faith communities and others who care about aging in Maryland.

Senate Bill 642 defines “Community-based long-term services and supports” as long-term services and supports, as defined in § 10-1001 of the Human Services Article, that serve individuals in the individuals’ homes and communities and not in an institution. This bill also alters a cap on waiver participation to not fewer than 7,500 individuals. The Department of Health shall send monthly waiver notice letters to individuals who are eligible or likely to be eligible for waiver participation. Waiver letters must be sent in sufficient quantity to allow for at least 7,500 individuals to participate in the waiver each fiscal year. Additionally, Senate Bill 642 requires a Task Force on Home- and Community-Based Waiver Services which will review the modernization of the policies of the Maryland Department of Health to reflect the State’s goal to ensure the delivery of care in the most appropriate setting, the use of State policies and payment mechanisms.

The Maryland Medicaid Home and Community Based Services Options Waiver (HCBOW) program can provide the needed services to Marylanders with disabilities at home. Last year, HCBOW served less than 5,700 individuals. Unfortunately, HCBOW has an 8-year, 22,000-person waiting list and is not required to meet the demand for services. When the MDH

readjusts HCBOW program availability every few years, it does not count eligible people on the 8-year, 22,000-person waiting list. In 2016, the MDH actually reduced program availability despite the size of the waiting list. As long as Marylanders are unable to live at home and bypass the 8-year, 22,000 person waiting list, their only option is entering a nursing home. This is costly and unnecessary. Senate Bill 642 provides Maryland an opportunity to educate those on the waiting list and potentially expand its home and community-based service program.

For these reasons, LeadingAge Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report for Senate Bill 642.

For additional information, please contact Aaron J. Greenfield, 410.446.1992