

Marylanders for Patient Rights

Marylanders for Patient Rights - FAVORABLE SB 204

Chair Delores Kelley
Senate Finance Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East Wing
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Kelley,

On behalf of Marylanders for Patient Rights, I am writing in **SUPPORT OF SB 204**, Memory Care and Alzheimer's Disease Unit Regulation. As a patient advocate, and as a person whose family has been affected by this debilitating disease, I appreciate the opportunity to comment on this legislation. Patients with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia are among our most vulnerable citizens.

SB 204 provides much needed standards of care in assisted living programs for those with dementia and other memory impairments, including staff training requirements. This bill will ensure that all those in assisted living who suffer from dementia will be afforded the needed level of care by qualified providers and provided with appropriate activities to reduce isolation whenever possible.

I'd like to share a personal story. My family friend suffered from dementia the last three years of her life, and I was her medical power of attorney, involved in all aspects of her health care. When my friend was a child, she survived the bombing of Britain (known as The Blitz) by the Nazis in World War II, and she was one of the kindest and strongest people I have ever known.

I often asked the assisted living facility and caregivers what kind of training they had received for working with those with dementia. The answer was always perfunctory—they probably had received a little training when they were first hired, sometimes years ago. I have learned from personal experience how complex and changeable the behaviors of a person with Alzheimer's may be, sometimes verging into paranoid psychosis. The average caregiver will not be prepared to handle the variety of situations presented without thoughtful and rigorous training protocols.

I urge your committee to return a FAVORABLE report on SB 204 and provide the standards of care and training in assisted living programs needed to protect those vulnerable Marylanders who suffer from dementia and memory impairment.

Thank you,

Anna Palmisano

Anna Palmisano, Ph.D.
Marylanders for Patient Rights
palmscience@verizon.net