



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL: House Bill 416 Health Care Facilities – Assisted Living Programs – Memory Care and Alzheimer's Disease Unit Regulations

SPONSOR: Delegate Belcastro

HEARING DATE: March 11, 2021

COMMITTEE: Health and Government Operations

CONTACT: Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 416 Health Care Facilities – Assisted Living Programs – Memory Care and Alzheimer's Disease Unit Regulations**, which requires the Maryland Department of Health to adopt regulations establishing standards for memory care and Alzheimer's disease units in assisted living programs.

Maryland has a significant senior population with 15.95% of the population over 65. African Americans and Latino Americans suffer from Alzheimer at a significantly higher rate than white Americans. Sixty percent of people with Alzheimer's or dementia wander according to the Alzheimer's Association and thus have very particular needs.

Memory care facilities should provide a safe, supportive and structured living situation for people with Alzheimer's or dementia. Appropriate staffing and activities for residents at different stages of the disease should be provided. Memory care staff should be trained to cope with the attendant medical and behavioral issues.

Yet Maryland currently fails to require memory care units to have appropriate staffing, dementia-care training or program services to meet the needs of residents with Alzheimer's or dementia. Minimal staff training on cognitive impairment and mental illness is required when staff are onboarded at assisted living facilities, but nothing is specific to the needs of memory care residents. In the absence of appropriate regulations, memory care operators have no consistent standard of care for our residents.

This is a patients' rights and health care issue, but also one of respect and care for our elders. **HB 416** establishes basic standards of care for people living with dementia and the corresponding criteria needed for employee training, staffing, activities, procedures and discharge to protect the health and welfare of vulnerable Marylanders.

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 416** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/MD>

https://www.alz.org/aaic/downloads2020/2020_Race_and_Ethnicity_Fact_Sheet.pdf