

Marylanders for Patient Rights

MARYLANDERS FOR PATIENT RIGHTS REQUESTS A FAVORABLE REPORT ON SB720

Marylanders for Patient Rights is a leading advocacy group for patients in our state. We strongly believe that SB720 is vitally important to the health and well-being of residents of Assisted Living Facilities (ALFs). Many of us have loved ones residing in ALFs and want the assurance that only appropriately qualified people are in charge of their care.

SB720 will establish a licensing and regulatory system under the aegis of a State Board of Long-Term Care Administrators. The current State Board of Examiners of Nursing Homes would be re-named, its duties expanded, and expertise in ALFs would be included. SB720 will allow the state to update and modernize the current Board to better reflect the rapid growth in ALFs as an essential part of long-term care.

This change is way overdue. ALFs in Maryland have grown rapidly—currently more than 600 facilities serve thousands of vulnerable people. There is a clear need to provide more active oversight of ALFs at the state level. Responsibility for the well-being of this vulnerable population lies primarily with the ALF manager, therefore, the high licensing standards described in SB720 should be met. These standards are commensurate with those of nursing home administrators in terms of requirements and licensing.

The requirements proposed in SB720 are very reasonable, such as ensuring participation of board members with expertise and experience with assisted living programs and developing a system of record maintenance for licensing. Guidelines will ensure that high standards are maintained including continuity in leadership; codifying background checks; specifying qualifications for initial licensing and renewal; and a process for investigating complaints, revoking a license or taking disciplinary action.

Marylanders in ALFs—our family members, friends, and neighbors—deserve the assurance of a safe and secure living environment managed by highly qualified professionals. Please provide a favorable report on SB720.

Thank you,

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