

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB720

State Board of Examiners of Nursing Home Administrators –
Renaming and Licensure of Assisted Living Managers

MARYLAND STATE LEGISLATIVE 2022 SESSION

SENATE HEARING – 3/10/2022 FINANCE COMMITTEE, Senator Delores Kelley, Chair

Submitted By: Eileen Bennett, Montgomery County, MD Long Term Care Ombudsman

I am submitting testimony in **SUPPORT** of **SB720**, State Board of Examiners of Nursing Home Administrators – Renaming and Licensure of Assisted Living Managers. As director of the local long term care ombudsman program in Montgomery County, as well as my colleagues across the state, the ombudsman is an advocate, identified under the Older Americans Act, with authority to speak on behalf of residents in long term settings, including licensed assisted living. I have been an ombudsman advocate since 1989 and have personally experienced the changes in care which evolved from a marketing concept to the regulations governing licensed assisted living in Maryland. In the late 1990's Maryland was in the forefront of identifying the assisted living industry as more than a marketing term and developed consumer protections by enacting legislation governing various aspects of the business of care. However, the regulations have not kept pace with the more complex physical care and psycho-social needs equal to the nursing home level of care for some residents receiving healthcare in the assisted living service model. The consumer expects that the person in charge of these services maintains current and standard knowledge of care and business practices which are associated with a professional license. Assisted living residents deserve no less. For continuity, and streamlining of government, it is reasonable that the State Board of Examiners of Nursing Home Administrators be renamed and expanded to encompass the licensure of assisted living managers. The state ombudsman is also in support of the bill.

This legislation is a review of the past, an assessment of the present, and planning for the future of how assisted living services are consistently delivered in Maryland. Now is the time to recognize the alternative to nursing home care is achieved through multiple avenues, but the licensed entities should be accountable for the development and implementation of care practices by the individual who, by definition, is the assisted living manager. There is a standard of practice which the consumer expects accompanies the individual attaining and maintaining licensure which is reviewed by a professional board on a regular basis. In assessing the current state of assisted living, long term care ombudsmen are challenged daily by the lack of standardized knowledge of the assisted living managers in their jurisdictions. This bill is crafted to license everyone who is currently an assisted living manager who has taken the minimum requirements to attain that title. The future for the individual to continue in the field of practice is based the personal accountability to participate in the requirements to maintain that license at regular intervals. The future of assisted living services in Maryland needs to be invested in the standard of practice which holds the individual accountable for being current in care practices through continuing education and sanctions for individuals who are determined by their professional licensing board to be in violation. Through the Board of Examiners, the licensing information then becomes available through public records for the consumer to access.

Thank you for allowing me to share my professional insight in **SUPPORT** t of SB720.

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