

Wednesday, February 9, 2022

The Honorable Chair, Shane Pendergrass  
House Health and Government Operations Committee  
Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**House Bill 80: Home- and Community-Based Services Waiver - Participation and Applications SUPPORT**

My name is Heather Suri and I am the current president of the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the Aging Life Care Association.

We have over 200 chapter members, predominantly social workers and nurses, and of those members, about one quarter of them serve the residents of the state of Maryland. Our clients are among the most vulnerable in the state and often face complex challenges of aging and/or disability. While some of our clients have significant wealth and are able to pay for whatever care and support they need, all of us also provide guidance to families whose financial resources are extremely limited, or have finally been exhausted after paying for years of care.

We help these families understand what government services their loved one may be entitled to and how to navigate accessing those services. An issue that most of us face on a weekly basis is how to pay for long term care when our client and their family have run out of money.

The use of the Medicaid waiver provides the opportunity for working families to keep their aging loved one at home to honor the promise that they have often made to “never put me away in a nursing home.”

In many cases, quality of life and care are better at home rather than premature or unnecessary admission to a nursing home. These families are often still shouldering the burden of much of the care that is needed, but they can't do it all alone. Increased funding of the Medicaid waiver will not just provide great quality of life to our clients and keep families intact, it will also cost the state significantly less money than paying for care in a skilled nursing facility.

On behalf of the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the Aging Life Care Association, we strongly support the passage of House Bill 80.

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