



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

March 1, 2024

Senate Bill 875: Miriam Kelty Aging and Senior Social Connection Hub and Spoke Pilot Program
Written Testimony Only

POSITION: FAVORABLE

On behalf of the members of the Health Facilities Association of Maryland (HFAM), we appreciate the opportunity to express our support for Senate Bill 875.

HFAM represents skilled nursing centers and assisted living communities in Maryland, as well as associate businesses that offer products and services to healthcare providers. Our members provide services and employ individuals in nearly every jurisdiction of the state. HFAM is affiliated with the American Health Care Association/National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL), which is the largest association in the United States representing long-term and post-acute care providers.

Senate Bill 875 establishes the Miriam Kelty Aging and Senior Social Connection Hub and Spoke Pilot Program in the Maryland Department of Aging; establishes the purpose and the goals of the Pilot Program are to support the "village" concept of local, volunteer-led organizations that aim to provide certain services to community members who choose to age in place and to expand those services to more residents in the geographic region; and requires the Montgomery County Village Consortium to establish a certain plan and submit certain reports.

The "village" concept is an innovative way of helping older adults continue to age in place safely and independently with an enhanced quality of life. Villages are membership-driven organizations that provide support services such as organizing social activities, providing volunteer opportunities, assistance with transportation, and help around the house.

HFAM has long advocated that Marylanders should receive care in a clinically appropriate setting that meets both their medical and personal needs. If a person can safely age in place at home, then they should have the opportunity to do so. The village concept can help people safely remain at home in the community longer, reducing overall total costs of care.

We have an opportunity for villages to start to fill the gap between the services older adults need and what they can afford to age in place. And, villages are increasingly serving older adults in under-resources communities and diverse populations. This legislation is a step forward towards ensuring that we best utilize the resources we have available to expand and enhance the village model in Maryland.

For these reasons, we request a favorable report from the Committee on Senate Bill 875.

Submitted by:

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