

SB0712 - MDVA SecWoods Testimony.pdf

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Position: FAV



**Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of the Secretary**

WES MOORE
GOVERNOR

ARUNA MILLER
LT. GOVERNOR

ANTHONY C. WOODS
SECRETARY

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF Senate Bill 712
State-Owned Nursing Homes – Deficiencies, Citations, and Fines – Reporting Requirements
Finance Committee
February 29, 2024**

Thank you Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and members of the Committee.

For the record, I am Tony Woods, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs.

I am honored to appear before you today in support of SB 712 and respectfully ask the Committee for a favorable report.

As you know, since reports of poor conditions and neglect at Charlotte Hall were brought to my attention, my team has worked to overhaul the facility and give our veterans the care they deserve. We were honored to work in partnership with the legislature to pass legislation that requires contractors operating state-owned nursing homes, including Charlotte Hall, to provide notice of deficiencies and enforcement actions that are levied on the facility.

When I updated the House Health and Government Operations Committee last October, I spoke about the transition to the new contractor, PruittHealth, the reforms we've instituted, and how the work of transforming the facility has only just begun.

Since Pruitthealth took over operations, we've worked in lockstep to transform the culture, improve performance, and enhance our oversight model at Charlotte Hall. Today, we rely upon real-time dashboards that help us measure clinical quality measures, a six-person quality assurance team employed by the MDVA that conducts regular audits and spot checks, regular inspections from outside agencies (e.g., OHCQ, USDVA), and mandatory reporting of negative surveys thanks to the oversight bill enacted last year. That bill has been an important part of how we maintain transparency and we think we can go even further.

That is why we support SB 712 and are grateful to Senator Jack Bailey and Delegates Brian Crosby, Matt Morgan, and Todd Morgan for their leadership.

This bill holds my Department - not the management contractor - ultimately responsible for notifying stakeholders when a survey results in a deficiency or enforcement action within 15 days of a final survey finding.

This bill also expands the list of monitoring agencies to include the full range of organizations that play a role in ensuring we maintain high standards and deliver quality care to our residents. This includes the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Maryland Department of Labor, and local health departments like the St. Mary's County Department of Health.

Finally, this bill clarifies reporting timelines for my Department to provide notice to stakeholders about final survey findings and negative enforcement actions.

These changes are necessary to maintain oversight at the home and ensure that operations at Charlotte Hall are transparent.

In closing, I want to acknowledge the guiding ethos of this administration: "leave no one behind." To me, this solemn pledge starts with our most vulnerable veterans, including our Charlotte Hall residents. There is no greater work that we can do as a Department and as an administration than to make sure we get this right for the veterans at Charlotte Hall.

I ask for a favorable report on SB 712 and am happy to take your questions.

##

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony Woods". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and "W".

Anthony C. Woods
Secretary

SenatorBailey_FAV_SB712.pdf

Uploaded by: Jack Bailey

Position: FAV

JACK BAILEY
Legislative District 29
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties

Budget & Taxation Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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February 29, 2024

Senate Bill 712 – State-Owned Nursing Homes - Deficiencies, Citations, and Fines - Reporting Requirements

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to introduce Senate Bill 712. This bill would revise provisions of law enacted during the 2023 Legislative Session regarding the reporting of enforcement actions at State-owned nursing homes.

Last year, we took action in Senate Bill 974 in response of reports of mistreatment of residents at Charlotte Hall Veterans Home (CHVH) in St. Mary's County. Due to the timing of these reports becoming public, we needed to pass this bill in the final days of the legislative session. During the interim, I have been working with the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that the reporting mechanisms created by that bill align with the Department's procedures in responding to reports of residents' mistreatment. Senate Bill 712 has been drafted based on the recommendations of the Department on how to improve this reporting requirement.

The bill adds inspections by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Department of Labor, and the county health department to the notice clause, and specifies that notice shall be provided within 15 days of the final survey findings. It also requires the contractor to submit the notice of any deficiency to the State agency overseeing the nursing home for distribution to the Governor and the General Assembly. Finally, the bill alters the follow-up reporting provisions to better align them to the response times required by the Office of Health Care Quality and the VA.

I believe that these are technical changes and are consistent with the intent of last year's bill. For that reason, I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 712. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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Senator Jack Bailey

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Uploaded by: Lynn Nash

Position: FAV



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

February 29, 2024

Honorable Pamela G. Beidle
Chair, Finance Committee
3 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

SB 712—State-owned Nursing Homes-Deficiencies, Citations and Fines-Reporting Requirements- Request for Favorable Report

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

On behalf of the Maryland Military Coalition, and as its Communications Director, I am submitting testimony in favor of this bill. SB 712 requires that the Department, in this case the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs, to provide notification when a contractor that they employ to operate a state nursing home receives a deficiency or adopts a plan of correction. When receiving a deficiency, the Secretary or his designee must notify the Governor, the Finance and Health and Government Operations Committees, and those assembly members that represent the district where the nursing home is located within 15 days; the plan of correction within 30 days.

Maryland is home to Charlotte Hall, currently the only nursing home that the state operates. It has both a 168-bed assisted living program as well as 318 [skilled nursing home beds](#). During COVID-19, Charlotte Hall residents suffered more than surrounding nursing homes as the home incurred more COVID-related deaths than the national average. When the situation came to light, inspectors suspected that residents had also been abused. The contractor was fired, a new team was brought in and all residents were evaluated.

Since that time, Charlotte Hall has made steady progress, however, there continues to be some problems, which the [Secretary himself](#) said would take years to rectify. Today, the home has a 1 star out of 5 star quality rating by [Medicare](#). There were 18 complaints in the last 3 years, and the facility had 45 citations in that same period.

Charlotte Hall accepts not only veterans, but also their spouses, as only one of a handful of veteran homes do. The residents represent the most vulnerable of populations, often being economically disadvantaged. It is imperative that they be protected. More importantly, any future veterans' homes that will be built need to have the same oversight and protections.

**1101 Mercantile Lane, Suite 260 • Largo, Maryland 20774
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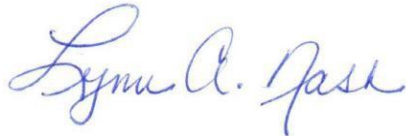
SB 712—State-owned Nursing Homes-Deficiencies, Citations and Fines-Reporting Requirements- Request for Favorable

Our veterans need to be treated with dignity and respect. As a nurse, and a previous Director of Nursing of a 100-bed extended care facility, I know that the events that took place at Charlotte Hall never should have been allowed to happen. Transferring responsibility for notifications to the Secretary is a step in the right direction.

The Maryland Military Coalition, is a voluntary, non-partisan organization representing 21 veteran service organizations who, in turn, serve over 150,000 Maryland uniformed services men and women and their families. The Coalition strongly supports SB 712 and asks for your *favorable report*.

Thank you to Senator Bailey for sponsoring this important legislation.

Respectfully,

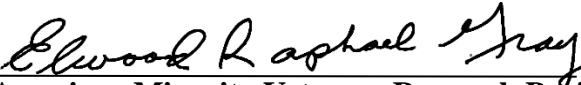
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lynn A. Nash". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lynn A. Nash, PhD, RN, PHCNS-BC, FAAN
CAPT (R), U.S. Public Health Service
Communications Director
Maryland Military Coalition Member Organizations Follow

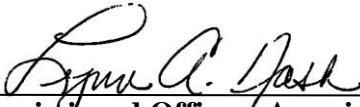
Member Organizations, Maryland Military Coalition


Air Force Sergeants Association


American Military Society


American Minority Veterans Research Project

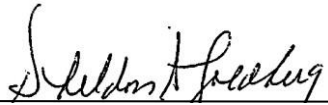

Association of the United States Navy



Commissioned Officers Association of the
US Public Health Service


Disabled American Veterans


Distinguished Flying Cross Association


Fleet Reserve Association


Jewish War Veterans of the USA


Maryland Air National Guard Retirees'
Association


Maryland Veterans Chamber of Commerce


Military Officers Association of America


Military Order of the Purple Heart

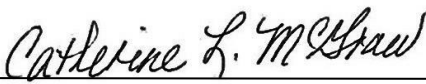

Montford Point Marines of America



National Association for Black Veterans


Naval Enlisted Reserve Association


NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers


Reserve Organization of America


Society of Military Widows


National Active and Retired Federal Employees
Veterans Affairs Directorate, NARFE MD


Veterans of Foreign Wars

SB 712 State Owned Nursing Homes – Deficiencies, C

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Position: FAV



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**SB 712 State Owned Nursing Homes – Deficiencies, Citations, and Fines – Reporting
FAVORABLE
Senate Finance Committee
February 29, 2024**

Good afternoon, Chair Beidel and members of the Senate Finance Committee. I am Tammy Bresnahan. I am the Senior Director of Advocacy for AARP Maryland. AARP, which advocates for the more than two million Marylanders age 50 and older has concerns and would like to see amendments to SB 712. We thank Senator Bailey for sponsoring this important legislation.

SB 712 requires the Department with oversight of a State-owned nursing home operated by a contractor, instead of the contractor, to provide notice of certain deficiencies and enforcement actions to the Governor and to members of the General Assembly.

States should fund sufficient quality monitors to inspect all providers at least annually in long term care settings. Complaints should be responded to promptly. Inspections should be unscheduled. Follow-up inspections should also be conducted as needed to ensure quality problems are corrected. Quality monitors should receive thorough and ongoing training about the unique needs of older people, including those with lifelong disabilities.

States should focus their monitoring efforts on improving clinical, functional, and quality-of-life outcomes. They should use performance-based outcome measures, including but not limited to consumer-experience and satisfaction measures. Monitoring efforts should intensify as problems are detected in quality outcomes and as the complexity and intensity of services increase.

AARP believes that SB 712 holds those who run a state-owned nursing home accountable. Whoever runs the facility, has the care of our most vulnerable citizens. The state should take every effort to ensure residents have the best of care and if they don't, the Governor and General Assembly should be the first to know. We request a favorable report on SB 712.



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Uploaded by: Randy Guy

Position: FWA

ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT
**COMMISSIONERS OF
ST. MARY'S COUNTY**



James R. Guy, President
Michael R. Alderson, Jr., Commissioner
Eric S. Colvin, Commissioner
Michael L. Hewitt, Commissioner
Scott R. Ostrow, Commissioner

**Senate Bill 712
State-Owned Nursing Homes – Deficiencies, Citations and Fines – Reporting
Requirements**

SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

February 6, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Beidle:

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS SB 712- State-Owned Nursing Homes – Deficiencies, Citations and Fines – Reporting Requirements** which is being heard in the Finance Committee. The Commissioners of St. Mary's County request that SB 712 be amended to require that "*the local governing body in which the nursing home is located*" be added to the list to whom a deficiency or enforcement action is reported. Currently SB 712 language states that the deficiency or enforcement action would be given to the Governor, the Senate Finance Committee, the House Health and Government Operations Committee and the members of the General Assembly who represent the district in which the nursing home is located.

We **support with amendments SB 712** and request a favorable report. We appreciate the introduction of this legislation and believe it will benefit the citizens of St. Mary's County. We look forward to working with you on this and other initiatives throughout the session.

Sincerely,
COMMISSIONERS OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY


James Randy Guy, President

CSMC/AB/sf
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The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair

February 6, 2024

Cc: Senator Jack Bailey
Delegate Todd Morgan
Delegate Matthew Morgan
Delegate Brian Crosby
Commissioner Mike Alderson, Jr.
Commissioner Eric Colvin
Commissioner Michael Hewitt
Commissioner Scott R. Ostrow
David Weiskopf, County Administrator
John Sterling Houser, Deputy County Attorney