



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

## Sponsor Testimony in Favor of Senate Bill 897 – Maryland Department of Health – Residential Service Agencies – Training Requirements

### Position: Favorable with Amendments

Chairwoman Kelley, Vice-Chair Feldman, and Members of the Senate Finance committee:

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 897. This bill would require residential service agencies (RSA) in Maryland to provide their direct care and administrative staff with five hours of initial training related to dementia care, as well as two hours of continuing education for staff every year. It also provides certain guidelines for that training, based on the Alzheimer's Association's Dementia Care Practice Recommendations, developed by a multi-stakeholder group convened by the Association to improve the quality of care for the **1 in 3 seniors who have dementia across the State**.

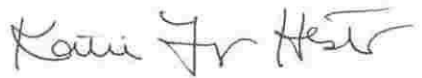
This legislation and accompanying conforming amendment before you today is a result of compromises and agreements between the advocates for this bill, industry groups, and the State. I am pleased to say the language presented to the committee was crafted with input from LeadingAge Maryland, the Maryland National Capital Homecare Association (MNCHA), the Alzheimer's Association, and the Maryland Department of Health to develop a bill that is more palatable for everyone. As compared to the bill put forward last session, this legislation as amended would:

- *Help providers, by:*
  - allowing them to choose whether they want to provide on-site mentoring programs or other supports for their workforce;
  - reducing the number of initial training hours from 8 originally down to 5; and
  - reducing the number of continuing education hours from 4 to 2
- *Lessen the burden on the State of Maryland, by:*
  - eliminating the process that requires the State to actively review curriculum and offer their formal approval;

- o removing an active oversight role for the state, who currently only visits these 1200+ providers when a complaint is filed.

With this simple legislation, we can set a baseline of training for all direct care and supervisory staff at Residential Service Agencies - requirements that already apply to staff in assisted living and nursing homes in the State of Maryland. Our seniors deserve to have trained caregivers and a high quality of care, regardless of where they receive it. This bill is supported by providers including Leading Age, a not-for-profit association of Assisted Living, Nursing Home, and Residential Service Agencies. You will also see supportive written testimony from organizations including: AARP (noting the importance of this legislation for Maryland's seniors) and the Public Justice Center (noting the need to equip and empower low wage direct care workers with skills to help seniors with Alzheimer's and related dementia). I would like to thank this committee for the work you have already done to improve the standard of care for over 110,000 Marylanders with Alzheimer's, and countless others with dementia. **I respectfully request a favorable report for SB897.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Katie Fry Hester". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Katie" being the most prominent.

Senator Katie Fry Hester  
Howard and Carroll Counties