



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

March 11, 2021

Senate Bill 837: Health - Advance Care Planning and Advance Directives
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 837. HFAM represents over 170 skilled nursing centers and assisted living communities in Maryland, as well as nearly 80 associate businesses that offer products and services to healthcare providers.

HFAM members provide the majority of post-acute and long-term care to Marylanders in need: 6 million days of care across all payer sources annually, including more than 4 million Medicaid days of care and one million Medicare days of care. Thousands of Marylanders across the state depend on the high-quality services that our skilled nursing and rehabilitation centers offer every day.

Senate Bill 837 would require the Maryland Health Care Commission to coordinate the implementation of advance care planning programs in the State. It requires each health insurance carrier to offer electronic advance directives to its members and enrollees during open enrollment and periodically thereafter.

As many residents and patients in long-term and post-acute care are older, may be disabled, or have some form of dementia, advance care planning documents are commonplace and are often created or updated for those in our settings. It is critical to ensure that a resident's or patient's preferences are formally documented to facilitate care planning and stimulate family conversations on this important topic in any way we are collectively able.

As we all know, the law sometimes lags behind technology. With the social distancing requirements put in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever that advance care directives be readily available electronically and remotely.

For these reasons, we request a favorable report from the Committee on Senate Bill 837.

Submitted by:

Joseph DeMattos, Jr.
President and CEO
(410) 290-5132