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BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

February 23, 2021

Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support of HB 962 – Washington County –
Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Programs – Essential Caregivers

Dear Delegate Pendergrass:

By a vote of 5-0, the Board of County Commissioners of Washington County supports HB 962. The bill would require nursing homes and assisted living programs to establish policies and procedures authorizing visitation by essential caregivers.

The COVID pandemic has caused many heartbreaking circumstances of elderly and vulnerable adults being treated and dying while totally isolated from their family members. It is understandable that skilled nursing facilities need to use quarantine and isolation to protect the residents from widespread infection. However, the resulting isolation imposes a harmful and cruel toll on the mental, physical, and emotional health of the vulnerable adults who are separated from family and essential caregivers on whom they depend.

House Bill 962 strikes a balance of protecting the overall population of the nursing home with the needs of individual residents for visits and care. It requires each facility to consult with the Health Officer to develop procedures and schedules that will meet the needs of the patient and manage the risks to the facility population.

For these reasons, the Board of County Commissioners urges the approval of HB 962.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

BY:  _____
Jeffrey A. Cline, President

cc (via email): Delegate Neil Parrott