

SB 677 Maryland Health Care Commission – Nursing Homes – Audit

Position – Favorable from the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman

March 17, 2022

As the State Long-term Care Ombudsman, I advocate for the most vulnerable residents in Maryland, residents of nursing homes and assisted living facilities. One of the challenges for residents, families and other members of the public is how to be an informed consumer and understand the complexities of how nursing homes are funded and owned.

There are concerns about ownership and fiscal transparency of nursing homes including the role of private equity firms and real estate investment trusts. The information currently online is often incredibly difficult to find, difficult to interpret, and incomplete. For instance this link: <https://health.maryland.gov/mmcp/longtermcare/Pages/Nursing-Facility-Providers.aspx> has information about transmittals and other reports, and the link to the cost reports provided on the site is broken.

The information on other websites related to ownership and other financial information is often hard to find, not connected to the other websites, and does not provide a synthesis of the information as required by the bill.

The Ombudsman Program has received numerous complaints related to staffing and financial issues in facilities. This bill would help identify potential causes of those complaints and help develop solutions.

The annual report and the work force survey would be incredibly beneficial for an understanding of the nursing homes in the state. Knowledge will lead to better resident care and a more informed consumer. If Maryland is more transparent in their long-term care facility practices, individuals will be more likely to choose long-term care facilities in our state.

I respectfully ask the Committee to give this bill a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Stevanne Ellis

Maryland Long-Term Care Ombudsman