



576 Johnsville Road
Sykesville, MD 21784

TO: Health and Government Operations
FROM: LeadingAge Maryland
SUBJECT: Senate Bill 700, Maryland Department of Health – Prevent Workplace Violence in Health Care Settings Public Awareness Campaign Workgroup
DATE: March 31, 2022
POSITION: **Favorable**

LeadingAge Maryland supports Senate Bill 700 Maryland Department of Health – Prevent Workplace Violence in Health Care Settings Public Awareness Campaign Workgroup.

LeadingAge Maryland is a community of more than 135 not-for-profit aging services organizations serving residents and clients through continuing care retirement communities, affordable senior housing, assisted living, nursing homes and home and community-based services. Our mission is to expand the world of possibilities for aging in Maryland. We partner with consumers, caregivers, researchers, public agencies, faith communities and others who care about aging in Maryland.

This bill requires the Secretary of Health to establish the Prevent Workplace Violence in Health Care Settings Public Awareness Campaign Workgroup (“Workgroup”). The Workgroup is charged with developing a public awareness campaign on preventing workplace violence in health care settings and to create a plan for implementing the campaign.

Verbal and physical violence against healthcare workers have reached considerable levels worldwide, and the World Medical Association has defined violence against health personnel “an international emergency that undermines the very foundations of health systems and impacts critically on patient’s health.” Violence was already a concern facing health care organizations prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The ongoing health crisis has elevated tensions due to masking enforcement, visitor restrictions, the recent requirement that staff within all Medicare and Medicaid-certified facilities be vaccinated against COVID-19, and staff burnout.

The full scope of the problem is not fully known. As the U.S. Government Accounting Office report noted, “Health care workers may not always report such incidents, and there is

limited research on the issue, among other reasons.” In fact, research has variously found that only 20 to 60 percent of nurses report incidents of violence.

Establishing this workgroup to develop a public awareness campaign is a critical step in acknowledging and addressing violence in health care settings.

For these reasons, LeadingAge Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 700.

For additional information, please contact Aaron J. Greenfield, 410.446.1992