

WES MOORE
GOVERNOR

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CHRISTOPHER D. KEARNEY, M.D.
CHAIRPERSON

STATE OF MARYLAND
ADVISORY COUNCIL ON QUALITY CARE AT THE END OF LIFE

February 6, 2023

William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East
Miller Senate Office Building,
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Senate Bill 98 – Correctional Services – Geriatric and Medical Parole – Support

Dear Chair Smith,

The State Advisory Council on Quality Care at the End of Life supports Senate Bill 98.

The main statutory mission of the Council is to advise on issues of care for seriously ill Marylanders at the end of life. The Council is currently partnering with the Maryland Health Care Commission as part of a legislatively mandated workgroup to study the existing state of palliative care services provided to seriously ill patients throughout the health care system in Maryland. In addition to the Council's participation in this workgroup's work to review hospital, nursing home, and community-based care, the Council has been reviewing the care of seriously ill incarcerated Marylanders.

In our public meetings, recent examples of care provided to seriously ill inmates have been presented, raising significant concerns about the quality of care provided to these elderly and terminally ill citizens. We have learned about a dying patient who was transferred back and forth to an acute hospital bed, shackled, and no contact with his family. We have heard other examples of wheelchair and oxygen dependent individuals, as well as demented inmates in prison infirmaries, who likely could receive appropriate care in a community setting, and who pose no meaningful threat to society. We know there is no true hospice care in our prisons.

In the Council's public meeting held on January 31, 2023, it was the consensus of the Council members to support Geriatric and Medical parole reforms as proposed in SB 98. We strongly feel all Marylanders, regardless of their residency, deserve equal access to standard care for their serious medical illnesses, and compassionate end of life care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christopher Kearney / kt".

Christopher D. Kearney, M.D.

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