



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

HB1263

March 7, 2024

TO: Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee
FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations
RE: House Bill 1263 – Assisted Living Programs - Assisted Living Referrers - Requirements and Prohibitions

POSITION: FAVORABLE

Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 1263.

HB 1263 increases the accountability of assisted living referrers – both to the consumers they serve and to the State Health Department. As defined in Section 19–1813 of the State Health Article, “assisted living referrers” are individuals or agencies that refer people to assisted living programs and that are paid by an assisted living program or other third party for those referrals. HB 1263 requires that assisted living referrers maintain general liability insurance, conduct criminal background checks of their employees, and maintain a written document, signed by the parties, that specifies what services the referrer entity is providing. HB 1263 also requires the referrer entity to arrange a tour of the facility to which it is referring the client, for the client and the client's family. These measures will improve transparency for assisted living referrer organizations.

The Baltimore City Long Term Care Ombudsman program (which is based in the Baltimore City Health Department Division of Aging) acts as an advocate for residents of Baltimore's more than 500 licensed assisted living facilities. Assisted living referrers play an important role in the assisted living industry, often facilitating discharges from hospitals into these facilities. These referrers, which tend to operate with minimal oversight, should be required to be more transparent to the people they are placing and their families, to assure that vulnerable older adults and persons with disabilities are not placed in unlicensed facilities, or are otherwise subject to exploitation or abuse. HB 1263 is an important step toward exerting accountability for assisted living referrers.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on HB 1263.