



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
HOUSE HEALTH AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE**

January 24, 2024

HB 189: Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Provider Agencies and Personal Care Aides -
Reimbursement and Wage Reports (Homecare Workers Employment Act of 2024)

Written Testimony Only

POSITION: FAVORABLE

On behalf of the Health Facilities Association of Maryland (HFAM), we appreciate the opportunity to express our support for House Bill 189. HFAM is the oldest long-term and post-acute care provider association in Maryland and is affiliated with the American Health Care Association/National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL). HFAM skilled nursing members provide nearly three million days of care across all payer sources annually, including approximately two million days of Medicaid care.

House Bill 189 requires provider agencies to submit certain reports to the Maryland Department of Labor regarding wage rates for personal care aides on or before September 1 each year, beginning in 2025; and requiring, by September 30, 2026, and every 2 years thereafter, the Maryland Department of Health to submit reports to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Health and Government Operations Committee regarding reimbursement rates for provider agencies and any recommended regulatory or legislative changes.

We believe that for consistent quality care across all healthcare settings, reporting must be consistent. The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) currently collects Medicaid cost report data from Medicaid providers and that data is publicly available. Nursing home staffing data, including nursing hours and labor costs, is publicly available via the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Payroll-Based Journal (PBJ) data. We must also have data regarding wage rates for personal care aides to better inform potential public policy changes.

This legislation reflects the findings of the recently released final report of Maryland's Commission to Study the Health Care Workforce Crisis. The report recommends that healthcare data be collected, analyzed, and managed on a consistent basis to ensure Maryland has a diverse healthcare workforce.

Often, healthcare public policy is focused on hospitals or nursing homes. Of course, these settings are important but the truth is that most people in Maryland and across the nation receive care at home. Therefore, it is essential that we also collect and analyze data for workers in home care settings – especially because much of this workforce is funded by non-negotiable Medicaid rates set by the government.

Labor, revenue, and profits are critical to the success of any enterprise. In healthcare, long-term success also correlates to quality care. In all of this, data is essential. For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 189.

Submitted by:
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