



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

Testimony of Maryland Centers for Independent Living

SUPPORT

House Health and Government Operations, January 24, 2024

The seven Centers for Independent Living (CILs) were established by federal law and work to ensure the civil rights and quality services of people with disabilities in Maryland. CILs are nonprofit disability resource and advocacy organizations located throughout Maryland operated by and for people with disabilities. CIL staff and Boards are at least 51% people with disabilities. We are part of a nationwide network which provides Information and Referral, Advocacy, Peer Support, Independent Living Skills training, and Transition Services.

The Independent Living Network submits this written testimony in strong **support** of HB 189.

Demand for home care is increasing as Marylanders age and more Marylanders with disabilities receive care in their homes rather than in nursing facilities. Currently, there is a shortage of personal care aides (PCAs) and high turnover in the home care industry as PCAs take jobs in other sectors with better pay and benefits. Medicaid funds most home care and data on home care workers' wages is lacking.

HB 189 has two main parts. First, it requires reporting of certain Medicaid-funded home care workers' wage rates, and second, it lays the groundwork to solve the PCA workforce crisis by increasing PCA workers' wages.

In summary, this bill will improve PCAs workers' wage data for certain Medicaid-funded home care programs while ensuring that PCA workers get improved pay, thus improving job quality, recruitment and retention. Many people with disabilities across the state rely on personal care aides to help maintain their independence at home and to participate in the communities in which they live.

The Maryland Independent Living Network **supports** HB 189 and **urges** a favorable report.

Thank you for your consideration and anticipated support.

Contact Information:

Chris Kelter

Accessible Resources for Independence

443-713-3914

ckelter@arinow.org