

Marylanders for Patient Rights

MARYLANDERS FOR PATIENT RIGHTS REQUESTS A FAVORABLE REPORT ON HB189: Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Provider Agencies and Personal Care Aides – Reimbursement and Wages

Marylanders for Patient Rights is a leading advocacy group for patients in our state. We strongly support HB189 which will allow the State to collect important data that will enable effective policymaking. Maryland has a shortage of fundamental data required to optimize planning for our future workforce needs in the homecare industry.

We know that an alarming shortage of personal care aides has been predicted as our population ages. A study by Phi National, a recognized authority on direct care workforce, estimated that Maryland will need 40% more home care workers in the next ten years. Finding and keeping home health care workers is becoming increasingly difficult for Marylanders and their families, as care workers opt for better paying employment and benefits at retail giants and restaurants.

HB189 will help to solve the data gap problem by requiring that home care agencies receiving Medicaid reimbursements report the average and the range of pay rates for personal care aides to the Maryland Dept of Labor on an annual basis. Moreover, HB189 would require rate studies every two years, with reports to Senate Finance and House HGO Committees. The rate studies would involve interviews with key stakeholders and examine the cost of ensuring that workers are paid at least 50% more than minimum wage. These reports are essential to ensure that reimbursement rates are adequate for the competitive wages needed to maintain this vital workforce. These provisions are similar to policies in five other states.

Please provide a favorable report on HB189, and help to protect Maryland patients by ensuring data-driven policy for our vital homecare workforce.

Thank you,

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