

HB1263 Assisted Living Programs-Assisted Living Referrers-Requirements and Prohibitions

Greetings Chair Pena- Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and members of Health and Government Operations. I am Delegate Cheryl Pasteur.

Last year, in my testimony in about the Taskforce on the Prevention of Elder Abuse, I read that Assisted Living Facilities have become the fastest growing sector of the country's long term care market. Seeing so many of my friends opting out of their houses and into senior living communities, particularly with levels of care, from independent to assisted to memory care living, it is no surprise that the number of referral agencies are, also, cropping up. The unfortunate reality is that with those numbers increasing, legitimate referral services must compete with those which are absent of the integrity and care we would hope would be present for the care of our elderly residents. HB 1263 is to use the previous work of the General Assembly and enact effective means of protecting and preventing abuse of any sort of our elders.

Whether the residents and /or their families move into senior facilities because of health issues, cognitive or physical, as one who needs a level of assisted care or move to a facility to lessen the burden of maintaining a home, the expectation is that their lives will be easier and supported. This bill is toward assuring and ensuring that our elders are well cared for by those in their lives, professionally and personally. This bill is intended, as well, to safeguard these vulnerable citizens, who frequently underreport incidents of abuse, or who are just in a place which is not a good fit for them. This bill is not a hammer, meant to malign these referring companies. It is to hold all to guidelines which are consistent with other states and with other referral agencies, to include:

- Criminal background checks of employees
- Transparency in the relationship between the client and referrer, better serving their needs.
- General liability insurance
- An accessible database of licensed assisted living programs by the Office of Health Care Quality

HB 1263 is personal for me, yes, and it is meant only to professionalize the ALRAs and are transparent and equitable, offering the quality of life, dignity, and respect we all want but, particularly, in what is supposed to be the golden years. I ask for support for HB1263. Thank you.