

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Senate Finance Committee

HB036
Favorable

FROM: Annie Coble
Assistant Director, Maryland Government Affairs

DATE: January 22, 2025

RE: HB036 Department of Aging – Aging Services – Program Repeal and Consolidation

Johns Hopkins supports **HB036 Department of Aging – Aging Services – Program Repeal and Consolidation**. This bill consolidates three programs that support older adults where they live to efficiently and effectively serve more older Marylanders. The programs being consolidated are Senior Care, Senior Assisted Living Subsidy and Congregate Housing Services. This change will reduce the administrative burden and make the programs more accessible. Johns Hopkins treats hundreds of patients that would benefit from easier access to these programs. We see this as a first step and would hope moving forward the Department can continue to build the investment in these programs and create reasonable timelines for enrollment.

Johns Hopkins has several innovative programs to assist the aging population to remain safely in their homes for as long as possible. These programs have been incredibly successful in improving the quality of life for the aging population and reducing health care costs. Making more funding available for these programs, and programs like these, will only continue to improve the lives of the growing aging population. We support the Department making their programs more easily accessible through this legislation.

The Johns Hopkins programs that best demonstrate the importance of funding Aging-in-Place programs are:

- Community Aging in Place-Advancing Better Living for Elders (CAPABLE). CAPABLE is a program developed at the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing for low-income seniors to safely age in place. The program consists of time-limited services from an occupational therapist, a nurse, and a handy worker working in tandem with the older adult as an inter-professional team.
- Hopkins ElderPlus (HEP) and Program of All-Inclusive Care for Elderly (PACE). HEP is Johns Hopkins' PACE program, designed to provide and coordinate all needed services to allow older individuals to continue living in the community. In addition to the traditional Medicare services, participants can receive physical therapy beyond the normal Medicare limits, as well as dentures, eyeglasses, and hearing aids, at no cost. Doctors or nurse practitioners make home visits, and home health aides may help with hygiene, light housekeeping, and other chores. This bill creates an opportunity to better access similar programs through the Department of Aging to better serve the neediest Marylanders.
- Hospital investments. Johns Hopkins currently provides a large amount of hospital-based funding to support patients waiting to access these programs, most notably the patients on the Assisted Living Facilities Waiver. We understand how important it is for patients being in appropriate settings and do our best to make sure patients can be placed there.

We appreciate that the Department is trying to create greater access and preparing for the incoming older adults and await the progress that comes from streamlining that comes from this legislation. For those reasons, Johns Hopkins urges a **favorable** report for HB036 Department of Aging – Aging Services – Program Repeal and Consolidation.