



**Bill:** HB 671 - Nursing Facilities - Medicaid Quality Assessment - Funding of Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman

**Committee:** Appropriations

**Position:** Favorable

**Date:** March 10, 2026

On behalf of the 127,200 Marylanders living with Alzheimer's disease and the many others with another type of dementia, the Alzheimer's Association supports HB 671. This bill will strengthen the Maryland Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program by requiring the Governor to allocate at least 3% of revenues from the Medicaid Nursing Facility Quality Assessment to support Ombudsman operations. This stable funding commitment is essential to protect the health, safety, and well-being of residents living with dementia in long-term care settings.

Marylanders living with dementia make up a substantial portion of Maryland's long-term care population. In 2025, an estimated 46% of nursing home residents and 42% of individuals in residential care facilities (such as assisted living) were living with dementia.<sup>1</sup> These individuals rely on the Ombudsman Program to investigate complaints, safeguard resident rights, and advocate for individuals who often cannot advocate for themselves.

The Ombudsman Program's Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Annual Report highlights the immense demand for their services. In FY25 alone, the Program investigated 3,978 complaints and completed 7,252 visits to nursing homes and assisted living homes. These numbers underscore how critically residents depend on the Ombudsman Program, especially individuals living with dementia who may have difficulty communicating concerns about abuse, neglect, poor care transitions, medication errors, or involuntary discharges.

HB 671 is an essential step toward ensuring sustainability in the Ombudsman Program. The Nursing Home Quality Assessment, essentially a bed tax on certain nursing homes, helps fund Medicaid reimbursements and support improvements in care. In FY24, this assessment generated approximately \$194 million,<sup>2</sup> which is then matched 50% by the federal government. A 3% allocation from this fund is a minimal, appropriate share, given the size of the fund and its intended purpose to also support quality of care. In addition, if federal support for the Ombudsman Program declines, Maryland risks losing ombudsman staff positions, directly reducing protections for some of the state's most vulnerable residents.

By ensuring stable funding, HB 671 directly strengthens Maryland's long-term care system and protects thousands of residents with dementia. For these reasons, the Alzheimer's Association urges a favorable report on HB 671. Please contact Megan Peters, Director of Government Affairs at [mrpeters@alz.org](mailto:mrpeters@alz.org) with any questions.

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<sup>1</sup> 2025 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures, <https://www.alz.org/getmedia/ef8f48f9-ad36-48ea-87f9-b74034635c1e/alzheimers-facts-and-figures.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Nursing Home Health Quality Assessment Implementation Annual Report, FY 2024, [https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/MDH/HG19-310.1\(f\)\\_2024\(rev\).pdf](https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/MDH/HG19-310.1(f)_2024(rev).pdf)