



Maryland Continuing Care Residents Association
Protecting the Future of Continuing Care Residents
The Voice of Continuing Care Residents at Annapolis

SUBJECT: House Bill 276 - Congregate Care Facilities – Visitation
COMMITTEES: House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Shane Pendergrass, Chair
DATE: Tuesday, February 2, 2021
POSITION: **FAVORABLE**

The **Maryland Continuing Care Residents Association (MaCCRA)** is a not-for-profit organization representing the residents in continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs). Maryland has over 18,000 older adults living in CCRCs. The principal purpose of MaCCRA is to protect and enhance the rights and financial security of current and future residents while maintaining the viability of the providers whose interests are frequently the same as their residents. MaCCRA SUPPORTS efforts to:

- Enhance: Transparency, Accountability, Financial Security; and
- Preserve existing protections in law and regulation for current and future CCRC residents statewide.

On behalf of the Maryland Continuing Care Residents Association, we support House Bill 276. As drafted, HB276 *“requires a congregate care facility to allow a patient's or resident's family member to visit the patient or resident under certain circumstances; requires a congregate care facility to allow for an alternate means of communication with the patient or resident, such as audio or video calls, if the congregate care facility determines the presence of certain visitors presents a danger to the health and safety of patients, residents, or staff; requires the Maryland Department of Health to adopt certain regulations to implement the law.”*

Residents in congregate care settings, including continuing care residents in the independent living section of the CCRC, often rely on family members for support and sometimes for help with activities of daily living. **We ask that CCRCs are added to the definition to allow visitation to independent living residents.**

The ongoing pandemic has exacerbated social isolation and loneliness for individuals over several months. Access to family and friends is key to combating the isolation and sense of loneliness older people have experienced. We are hard wired for connection with people. There have been countless articles and research about the negative impact of social isolation on younger people. It is compounded with seniors.

A January 2021 survey by the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care titled *“The Devastating Effect of Lockdowns on Residents of Long-Term Care Facilities During COVID-19”*¹ reported that 91% of families surveyed reported that their loved one's demeanor (mental status) had declined.

We support efforts to promote safe visiting for residents living in any setting. We respectfully ask that CCRCs be considered in this legislation as well.

For these reasons we support House Bill 276 and ask for a Favorable report.

¹ [Devastating Effect of Lockdowns on Residents of LTC Facilities.pdf](#)