



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

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 47 - Health Facilities – Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Programs – Essential Caregivers
COMMITTEES: Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Delores Kelley, Chair
DATE: Thursday, February 4, 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 Senate Bill 47. As drafted, SB47 *“Requires each nursing home and assisted living program to establish certain policies and procedures authorizing indoor visitation from an essential caregiver and relating to the designation and use of an essential caregiver; authorizes nursing homes and assisted living programs to consult with a certain local health officer when establishing certain policies and procedures; requires an essential caregiver to inform the staff of the nursing home or assisted living program if the essential caregiver develops certain symptoms.”*

Many nursing homes continue with limitations on visitation or no visitation due to elevated COVID rates in the county. Residents in nursing homes and assisted living have suffered because family members could not visit. Some family members support the resident with feeding, socialization and the myriad of things that bring meaning and purpose to their life.

If family members considered essential caregivers are provided the appropriate PPE, there is no reason, they could not provide support needed and advocate on behalf of the resident.

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.

Restricting the presence of family members at the bedside is having a profound effect on their ability to provide comfort and participate in care and decision-making for their loved one. The lack of connect with family is not sustainable for the mental health of older people.

As we read the bill it was our understanding that this would apply to Assisted Living and Nursing Home units in CCRCs. If additional clarification is needed we respectfully ask that CCRCs be considered in this legislation as well.

For these reasons we support Senate Bill 47 and ask for a Favorable report.

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