

SB624 – Support  
Nina Heckman  
Springwell Senior Living  
[ninah@springwellseniorliving.com](mailto:ninah@springwellseniorliving.com) 410 664-4006

SB624 – Favorable  
Finance Committee  
February 24, 2022

Dear Chairman, Vice Chairman and Members of the Finance Committee

Thank you for your time today. My name is Nina Heckman, and I am one of two Community Sales Directors from Springwell Senior Living who are here today in support of SB 624. Springwell is a retirement community located in Baltimore City. We offer Independent Living, Assisted Living, and secure Memory Care. I have been working with seniors to transition to the Springwell for over 10 years. As a Community Sales Director, I have worked with many of the local referral advisors present here today, as well as many on-line referral agencies. Both are valuable resources as this can be a stressful time for a family as they navigate this transition.

The demand for community-based care is growing. Seniors and families are waiting longer to make this type of move and it can be an overwhelming undertaking to understand all the options that are available. It is more than just picking a great apartment. They need to understand care levels, services offered, associated costs, and community culture just to name a few.

Local referral advisors meet with the family in advance of community visits. Most are keenly aware of the senior's healthcare needs, family dynamics, financial resources, and expectations. They accompany the families on tours and help them to compare locations. These local referral advisors know the communities that they serve very well. They understand not only the physical layout of the property, but also the financial requirements. They also understand the character, strengths, and the subtle difference that each community offers which can make a huge difference to the seniors' quality of life.

Many qualified prospects are also sent to us through on-line referral agencies. In my experience, not all families are aware that they have entered into a contractual agreement with the on-line agency. Often, they describe doing an internet search for a community phone number, and suddenly they are inundated with phone calls they were not expecting. Many families indicate to us that they would prefer a more specialized service as described above because of the more intimate knowledge local advisors can provide. Rarely has a representative from an online agency been to our community and they are simply not in the same position to provide the same level of detail. We strongly believe that the consumer should understand fully the process of entering into any referral agreement. The terms should be transparent, and it should be their right to choose who represents them in this process.

I urge the Senate to pass SB624 to help protect our vulnerable seniors.