

SB 624 Assisted Living Programs – Assisted Living Referrers – Requirements and Prohibitions

Position – Support from the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman

Date: February 24, 2022

As the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, I advocate for the residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. At this time, Maryland has over 1600 assisted living facilities with over 25,000 assisted living residents. It is often difficult for individuals to navigate the long-term care system including choosing an assisted living facility. At times, individuals will work with an assisted living referrer to assist them with this task. There is very little consumer information related to assisted living referrers and placement agencies, and as a result very little transparency related to the related business practices of these entities.

The following points should be noted:

- This bill will enhance the current law by adding additional protections for the resident including privacy rights under HIPAA, liability insurance and a written contract.
- Criminal background checks are essential for working with individuals in assisted living facility and their families.
- This bill has conflict of interest provisions that protect resident rights and would reduce the possibility of exploitation and fraud.
- Resident and resident representative information would not be shared without consent.

This bill would lead to greater transparency and consumer protections as well as protect individuals from privacy violations and fraud. In addition, this bill will lead to more informed decision making for residents and their families.

As the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, I encourage you to support this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Stevanne Ellis, Maryland Long-Term Care Ombudsman