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**Senate Finance Committee
February 24, 2022**

Legislation: SB 624 Assisted Living Programs - Assisted Living Referrers - Requirements and Prohibitions

Sponsor: Senator Hettleman

Position: Support

The nineteen member organizations of Maryland Association of Area Agencies on Aging (M4A) serve Maryland's older and disabled citizens, providing a range of cost-effective state, federal and locally funded programs that help individuals remain secure in the community with dignity, independence, and choice as they age. M4A and its associated Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) represent the "front line" in Maryland's challenge to meet the complex and varied needs of well over 1 million older adults statewide. M4A's goal is to ensure coordination and communication with all partners on all aspects of senior service planning to enhance opportunity and availability to all eligible citizens.

AAAs are guided by the federal Older Americans Act "*to provide services with preference given to older individuals with the greatest economic and social need with particular attention to low-income minority individuals with limited English proficiency and older adults residing in rural areas.*"

Senate Bill 624 will require assisted living referrers to maintain and provide certain assisted living programs documents written signed and dated between the referrer and the client that include the right of the client to terminate the referrer's services for any reason at any time, and a requirement that the referrer communicate a cancellation of the agreement to all assisted living programs involving a client; requiring assisted living referrers to maintain certain insurance, and obtain criminal history records checks of employees; etc.

Each of these requirements are a beneficial addition to the assisted living referral law we supported that passed a few years ago and strengthen consumer protections. For these reasons, M4A supports SB 624 and urges a favorable report on the bill.