



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
HOUSE HEALTH AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE**

March 24, 2022

Senate Bill 531: Maryland Health Care Commission - Assisted Living Programs - Study
Written Testimony Only

POSITION: FAVORABLE

On behalf of the members of the Health Facilities Association of Maryland (HFAM), we appreciate the opportunity to express our support for Senate Bill 531. HFAM represents over 170 skilled nursing centers and assisted living communities in Maryland, as well as nearly 80 associate businesses that offer products and services to healthcare providers. Our members provide services and employ individuals in nearly every jurisdiction in the state.

Senate Bill 531 requires the Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC), in consultation with the Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ), the Maryland Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, the Medicaid Administration, the Governor's Workforce Development Board, and interested stakeholders, to conduct a study regarding the quality of care by assisted living programs with nine beds or fewer. This legislation also requires MHCC to report its recommendations, including draft legislation, to the Governor, the Department of Health, and certain committees of the General Assembly.

According to the OHCQ licensee directory, there are currently 1,699 licensed assisted living providers in Maryland. Of these licensed assisted living providers, 1,285 have nine beds or less. These small providers constitute a majority of licensees; however, they care for far fewer total Marylanders than assisted living providers with more than nine beds.

By way of background, all assisted living providers in Maryland are currently regulated the same regardless of bed size. Many assisted living providers with nine beds or fewer are independently owned, small enterprises. Some owners may operate several small facilities. These small providers have different challenges and operational structures than medium or large assisted living providers.

In our experience, the majority of medium and large assisted living centers provide an outstanding residential living experience and provide high quality care. This is also true of many small assisted living providers with four to nine residents. That said, we are most concerned about the extremely small assisted living centers who provide a residence and care to the poorest and most medically complex Marylanders.

It is critically important that we ensure the highest possible quality of care across the board for all residents in assisted living facilities regardless of size. It is also extremely important for consumers to have accurate and timely quality of care information to ensure that they and their loved ones are in the best setting for their clinical and social needs.

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We are at a critical point as we shape healthcare delivery going forward. Together, we must ensure continued quality care for all Marylanders and create lasting and sustainable common-sense solutions driven by data.

For these reasons, we request a favorable report from the Committee on Senate Bill 531.

Submitted by:

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