

## HB 1034 - State Board of Examiners of Nursing Home Administrators - Renaming and Licensure of Assisted Living Managers

Written Testimony – Ciara J. Lee, Executive Director, Maryland Board of Examiners of Nursing Home Administrators

Good Afternoon Everyone! My name is Ciara Lee. I am the Executive Director of the Maryland Board of Examiners of Nursing Home Administrators. I would first like to thank Chair, Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass and Vice Chair, Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk of the Health and Government Operations Committee, for this opportunity to provide testimony regarding House Bill 1034. I come to you today as the administrative representative of the Board Office, and to address the Board's support of House Bill 1034 for the following reasons:

- The bill promotes public safety and protection (which is a component of the Board's mission); and
- It encourages and promotes professionalism, accountability and responsibility for assisted living managers (ALMs) in Maryland.

The Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ) is the State department that regulates assisted living programs in Maryland. According to their Annual Report and Staffing Analysis for Fiscal Year 2021, there are 1,672 licensed assisted living programs in Maryland. Out of the number of assisted living programs that were surveyed in fiscal year 2021, the tenth most frequently cited deficiency was associated with Assisted Living Manager practices. So essentially, what disciplinary actions are imposed on ALMs when they are cited for deficiencies? From my understanding, sanctions are not imposed on ALMs and there is no process of implementing public orders or disciplinary actions against ALMs for public knowledge. Through the current processes of State regulatory oversight, ALMs are allowed to circumvent discipline and liability.

Maryland, compared to other states, has a high acute Long-Term Care facility population and serves a wider range demographic with health conditions that are continuing to require more health expertise. With the vagueness of the current regulations related to ALM training requirements, what is the consequence if training hours are not completed? How is the ALM held responsible? Is the ALM properly trained to oversee the residents they serve? Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic as infection control deficiencies are rising, House Bill 1034 is an extremely important piece of legislation that will strengthen the regulatory collaboration between OHCQ and the Board, but also the standardization of the ALM profession in Maryland, and most importantly, the protection and safety of residents. We ask that your take this into consideration and vote to support this bill.