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**HB 544 Health Facilities - Residential Service Agencies – Reporting Requirements
Favorable
House Health and Government Operations Committee
February 17, 2022**

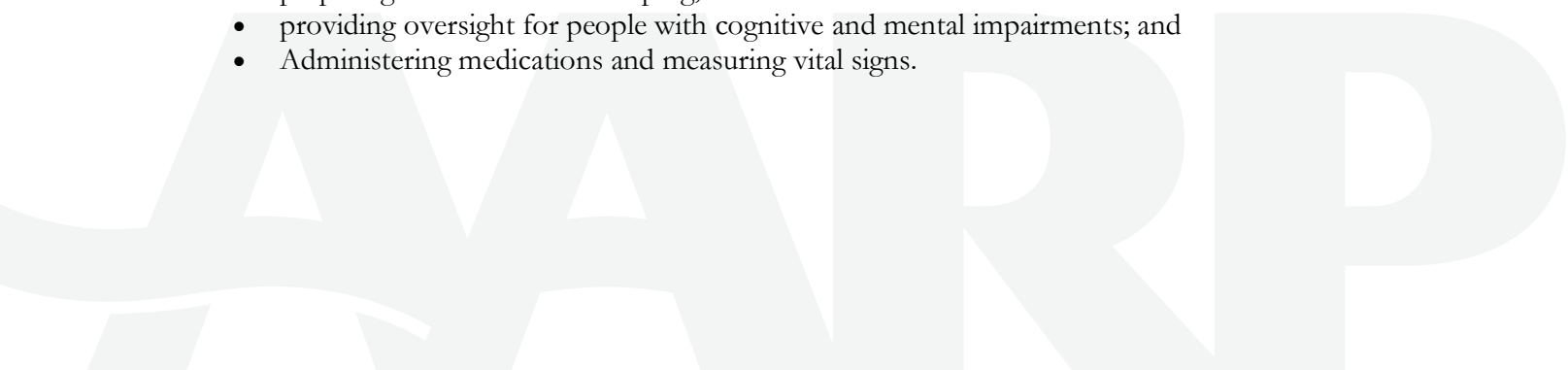
Good Afternoon Chair Pendergrass and members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee. I am Tammy Bresnahan. I am the Director of Advocacy for AARP MD. AARP Maryland is one of the largest membership-based organizations in the Free State, encompassing almost 870,000 members. **AARP MD overwhelmingly supports HB 544 Health Facilities - Residential Service Agencies – Reporting Requirements.** We thank Delegate Qi for championing this issue.

AARP is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, nationwide organization that fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse.

HB 544 requires residential service agencies receiving Medicaid reimbursement for providing home health care or similar services by personal care aides to report by October 1 each year to the Maryland Department of Health the hourly pay rate, how the aides are classified as an employee or independent contractor, and whether the aides have health insurance and are covered by worker's compensation through the agency, and whether the aides have earned sick and safe leave provided by the agency.

Personal care workers who work for Maryland residential service agencies provide the bulk of paid long-term care. These paraprofessional workers hold a variety of job titles, including personal care assistants, home care aides, home health aides, and certified nursing assistants (CNAs). They work in diverse settings, including private homes, adult day centers, assisted living residences and other residential care settings, and nursing homes. More than a million direct care workers in the U.S. work at jobs that may include:

- assisting with personal care activities, such as bathing, dressing, toileting, transferring, and eating;
- providing comfort and companionship;
- observing and reporting changes in a client's condition;
- preparing meals and housekeeping;
- providing oversight for people with cognitive and mental impairments; and
- Administering medications and measuring vital signs.



Although the majority of personal care workers find their jobs intrinsically rewarding, they are often low paid with limited or no benefits, high workloads, unsafe working conditions, inadequate training, a lack of respect from supervisors, lack of control over their jobs, and few opportunities for advancement, all of which contribute to high turnover.

To a large extent, the challenges facing the personal care workforce in Long Term Services and Supports in Maryland reflect nationwide realities. The workforce is comprised almost entirely of historically marginalized workers—including women, people of color, and/or immigrants—who face significant obstacles in education and employment. Despite the demands of the job and the unequivocal importance of their contributions, these workers still struggle to make a livable wage and achieve economic stability.

HB 544 will give us vital information about our frontline workforce caring for Maryland's most vulnerable. Reporting this information will help the state learn more about how state money is being spent and what benefits these vital/front line workers are receiving. For these reasons we respectfully ask the Committee for a favorable report. For questions, please contact Tammy Bresnahan tbresnahan@aarpp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.