



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

March 9, 2023

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: HB 774 - Assisted Living Programs – Unlicensed Programs – Resident Abuse and Neglect - Letter of Support

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of support for House Bill (HB) 774 - Assisted Living Programs – Unlicensed Programs – Resident Abuse and Neglect.

The Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ) is the agency within MDH charged with monitoring the quality of care in certain health care facilities and community-based programs, including assisted living programs. OHCQ oversees all assisted living programs in Maryland and conducts surveys for licensure, inspection of care, change of ownership, Alzheimer's special care units as well as investigates complaints and facility-reported incidents.

OHCQ's assisted living unit investigates about 120 allegations of unlicensed assisted living programs each year. These complaints come from the residents, family, employees, neighbors, local ombudsman, EMS, police, or other sources. OHCQ works closely with the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU) within the Office of the Attorney General to investigate and prosecute these unlicensed programs. In certain circumstances, this bill subjects an assisted living program that is operating without a license to immediate prosecution, rather than waiting 30 days as is now required. This bill is crucial to better protect the health and safety of Marylanders who are receiving services in unlicensed programs.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Megan Peters, Acting Director of Governmental Affairs at megan.peters@maryland.gov or (410) 260-3190.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary