



**Testimony Before the Senate Finance Committee  
SB 884 - Maryland Department of Health – Workgroup to Study the Establishment  
of an Affordable Assisted Living Enhanced Care Program  
March 21, 2023  
Support**

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, Maryland Chapter (NASW-MD), we would like to express our support for SB 884 - Maryland Department of Health – Workgroup to Study the Establishment of an Affordable Assisted Living Enhanced Care Program.

As social workers who serve older adults, we know that thousands of vulnerable Marylanders need the support provided by assisted living to maintain their health and wellbeing, yet few can afford the type of facility that provides this care in a safe, dignified, and personalized manner. SB 884 seeks to address this issue by calling for a task force that would examine two critical elements of assisted living in Maryland: Cost and quality.

In Maryland, according to **Genworth’s 2019 Cost of Care Survey**, the average monthly cost of assisted living was \$4,300, with monthly rates ranging from \$3,750 to \$6,263. Older adults with low or moderate incomes cannot afford these fees, many of which exceed their monthly incomes. Instead, they are forced to either move prematurely to a nursing home where they can access Medicaid, languish on a waitlist for years for a Medicaid Waiver Assisted Living slot, or move to a substandard assisted living facility that does not meet their needs. By exploring alternative funding possibilities, the task force would optimally develop a funding model that would make quality care available to people of modest means.

The bill’s focus on enhanced care is equally important. Today many assisted living facilities offer lodging, meals and medication management but fail to develop a personalized plan of care that honors each resident’s needs for meaningful engagement and social connection. The bill’s proactive approach to healthcare and socialization would help residents to stay more vital and alert, with a better quality of life.

Older Marylanders deserve safe, respectful, and personalized residential care. As the number of older Marylanders continues to grow, it is critical that we provide the kind of affordable, high-quality assisted living options that any of us would want for a loved one, or ourselves.

For these reasons, we urge you to vote yes on SB 884.

Respectfully,

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Executive Director, NASW-MD