

March 15, 2023

Chair Joseline Pena-Melnyk and Members
Health and Government Operations Committee
Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SUPPORT with Sponsor Amendments House Bill 1231 - Maryland Department of Health – Workgroup to Study the Establishment of an Affordable Assisted Living Enhanced Care Program

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk and Members:

On behalf of Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks' Administration, I write today in support of legislative efforts to establish an Affordable Assisted Living Enhanced Care (AALEC) Program in the State. We believe the AALEC model is just the kind of bold and innovative thinking needed to respond to the enormous wait list Maryland is currently facing for low-income seniors seeking care through the Home and Community Based Services Waiver and, quite simply, to ensure that no Maryland resident is left behind.

Members of the Administration, including myself, recently had the opportunity to visit an AALEC residence in Washington, DC, just several miles outside of Prince George's County, The Residences at Kenilworth Park, and were blown away by the level of quality and care it provides to low-income seniors in the district. Our low-income Maryland senior residents deserve that same level of quality and care.

By leveraging Medicaid funding to pay for services to attract developers and investors to build high quality affordable assisted living communities, this innovative model could serve to dramatically reduce the State's low-income senior housing shortage and corresponding long-term care challenge. Moreover, it would save Maryland significantly in future years by controlling hospital and emergency room stays and keeping our elderly in less acute settings as long as possible, at the same time providing tremendous mental health benefits by reducing social isolation.

Our vulnerable low-income senior population deserves the same quality of care as their more affluent peers. The AALEC model provides a mechanism to ensure they receive it.

We ask that you support this innovative effort and move favorable on this important piece of legislation.

Aspasia Xypolia

Director

Department of Housing and Community Development