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**HB 702 Health Care Facilities - Nursing Homes - Acquisitions and Licensure
House Health and Government Operations Committee
FAVORABLE
March 9, 2023**

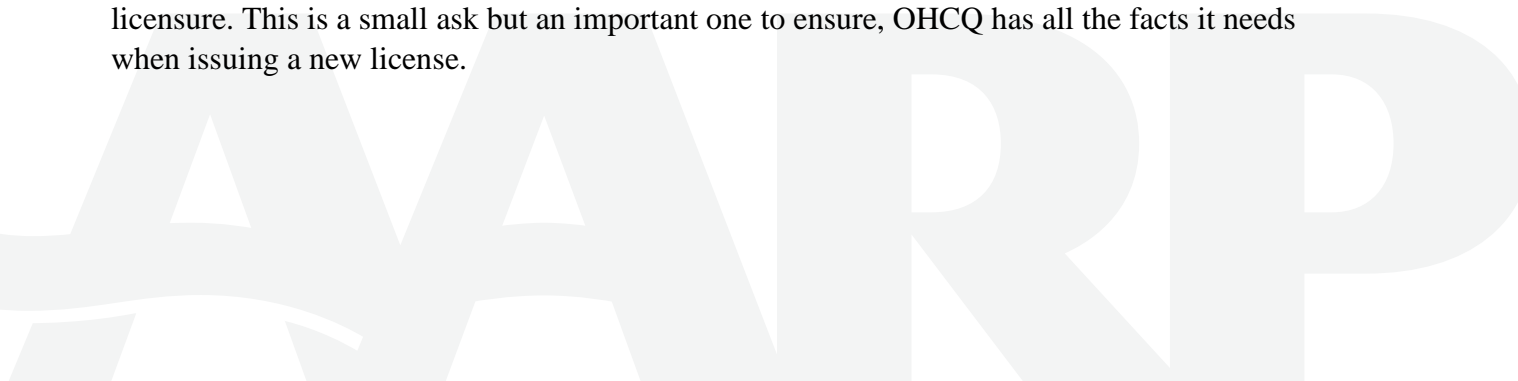
Good afternoon Chair Peña-Melnyk and members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee. I am Tammy Bresnahan, Senior Director of Advocacy for AARP MD. On behalf of our almost 900,000 members, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of HB702 Health Care Facilities—Nursing Homes—Acquisitions and Licensure. We thank the Delegate Kerr for sponsoring HB 701.

HB 702 requires the Maryland Health Care Commission to provide information regarding the acquisition of a nursing home to the Office of Health Care Quality and requires the Secretary of Health to consider the information before licensure to operate a nursing home.

There are many reasons why a full, clear, and constant view into the workings of nursing homes is important, especially considering the large role nursing homes play in long-term services and supports. Nursing homes provide a wide range of services to about 30,000 people annually in Maryland. Usually serving individuals with greater needs than those in assisted living or other residential settings. Nursing homes are required to provide everything a resident might need, including nursing care, 24-hour supervision, three meals a day, assistance with activities of daily living, and rehabilitation services (physical, occupational, speech). Most of the care is funded through taxpayer dollars.

Without a clear understanding and insight into a nursing home's provision and quality of services, there is no comprehensive ability to know whether nursing homes are effective, efficient, and providing quality care. Greater transparency and communication between state agencies could help consumers, their families, regulators, and advocates understand how nursing homes are directing the care they are responsible for providing residents.

When individuals enter a nursing home, protecting the quality of care requires regulators to work together to put up guardrails to prevent bad actors from practicing in our state. When evaluating a notice of acquisition or transferring interest of a skilled nursing home, the Maryland Health Care Commission to share its findings with the Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ). At that point, the OHCQ should consider the findings of the Maryland Health Care Commission prior to licensure. This is a small ask but an important one to ensure, OHCQ has all the facts it needs when issuing a new license.



AARP believes that intra-agency cooperation is a must. Open-book policies of transparency around all data related to nursing home licensure performance and quality that is used in monitoring, oversight, licensure, quality, and resident health and welfare should be available to state agencies responsible for the oversight of skilled nursing facilities.

For these reasons, AARP MD respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 702. If you have additional questions, please contact me at tbresnahan@arp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.