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**SB 825 Health Care Facilities – Delegating Inspections Authority –Related Institutions and
Nursing Homes
Senate Finance Committee
FAVORABLE
March 1, 2024**

Good afternoon, Chair Beidle and members of the Senate Finance Committee. I am Tammy Bresnahan, Senior Director of Advocacy for AARP MD. AARP Maryland advocates on behalf of over two million Marylanders age 50 and over. We would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of SB 825. We thank the Senator Kramer for sponsoring SB 825.

SB 825 requires the Secretary of Health, on request of a unit of local government, to delegate to the unit of local government the authority to inspect and to conduct site visits and full surveys of related institutions and nursing homes.

There are many reasons why a full, clear, and constant view into the workings of nursing homes is important, especially considering the significant 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 an extra set of eyes on these facilities and communication between state agencies and local government helps consumers, their families, regulators, and.

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. In efforts to make sure residents in nursing homes receive the best care, States should fund sufficient quality monitors to inspect all providers at least annually. Complaints should be responded to promptly. Inspections should be unscheduled. Follow-up inspections should also be conducted as needed to ensure quality problems are corrected. Quality monitors should receive thorough and ongoing training about the unique needs of older people, including those with lifelong disabilities.

Training should include all aspects of LTSS in nursing facilities, residential care settings, and home care.

States should focus their monitoring efforts on improving clinical, functional, and quality-of-life outcomes. They should use performance-based outcome measures, including but not limited to consumer-experience and satisfaction measures. Monitoring efforts should intensify as problems are detected in quality outcomes and as the complexity and intensity of services increase.

AARP believes that intra-agency cooperation is necessary. Open-book policies of transparency inspections into what happens in nursing home can be helpful when providing and monitoring oversight, and the quality of resident health and welfare.

For these reasons, AARP MD respectfully requests a favorable report on SB 825. If you have additional questions, please contact me at tbresnahan@aarp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.