



COMMISSION ON AGING

February 29, 2024

Finance Committee
Chair, Senator Pamela Beidle
Vice Chair, Senator Katherine Klausmeier
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

SB 875 SUPPORT

Dear Chair Beidle and Vice Chair Klausmeier:

I am writing on behalf of the Montgomery County Commission on Aging in support of the Miriam Kelty Aging and Senior Social Connection Hub and Spoke Pilot Program bill. The Commission is authorized by the Older Americans Act, P.L. 116-131, and was established by Montgomery County in 1974 to advise Montgomery County government on the needs, interests, and issues of older adult residents, and to advocate on their behalf at the local, state and national levels. Miriam Kelty was a member of the Montgomery County Commission on Aging from 2011 to 2017 and we are very pleased that she is honored by this Bill.

The proposed innovative hub and spoke pilot project described in the Bill is intended to assist the growth of Villages in diverse and lower income communities as well as ensure the sustainability and efficiency of existing Villages. This pilot program will create a grant to support the Montgomery County Village Consortium. The pilot will centralize tasks (currently undertaken by individual Villages) so that member Villages can maintain and grow services and events as well as share their expertise with other communities. The Montgomery County Village Consortium can make a very important contribution to learning, testing, and developing best practices for the hub and spoke model of Village management. This innovative model can potentially offer helpful insights which will be shared across Maryland and help the Maryland Department of Aging with their mission to make Maryland Longevity Ready.

Currently there are 30 active Villages in Montgomery County and seven in development. Although each Village is unique, they have a shared goal to reduce social isolation and provide volunteer help to seniors aging in place. For FY 2021-2022 the Montgomery

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County Villages produced a Collective Impact Report. In this study, the reporting Montgomery County Villages:

- Donated more than 57,000 volunteer hours that were estimated to be worth \$1,700,000.
- Filled 13,340 service requests over a two-year period.
- Provided 6,221 volunteer rides.
- Engaged 3,555 people as members and volunteers.
- Conducted 3,353 social activities and events.

These outstanding results were accomplished by the current operating Villages. However, Villages in diverse and lower income communities require start-up support as starting a Village is a complex process. Additionally, active Villages seek to collaborate on creating an efficient and cost-effective administration to ensure sustainability and future growth. These outstanding results could be expanded by providing administrative support through the hub and spoke model to fledgling Villages.

The Montgomery County Commission on Aging believes that Villages are vital contributors to the well-being of older adults and can help them thrive in their communities. Testing and providing additional administrative support in a hub and spoke model will be a vital way to expand the Village movement and help more older adults age in place.

The Commission on Aging is available to offer additional information to support this Bill.

With great appreciation for this initiative and all good wishes for its success, we urge favorable consideration for SB875.

Sincerely,

David Engel

David Engel, Chair

Montgomery County Commission on Aging

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