



Bill: SB 679 - Nursing Homes - Direct Care Wages and Benefits and Cost Reports (Nursing Home Care Crisis Transparency Act)

Committee: Finance Committee

Position: Favorable

Date: February 18, 2025

On behalf of the 127,200 Marylanders living with Alzheimer's disease and their 247,000 caregivers, the Alzheimer's Association supports SB 679 - Nursing Homes - Direct Care Wages and Benefits and Cost Reports (Nursing Home Care Crisis Transparency Act). This bill aims to improve nursing homes' fiscal transparency and ensure that a fair percentage of revenue is spent on wages and benefits for direct care workers.

The largest segment of the workforce that supports people living with dementia is the direct care workforce.¹ These workers – consisting of personal care aides, home health aides, nursing assistants, and more – assist with activities of daily living, such as bathing and eating, and play a broader role in promoting well-being for those living with dementia. Many of these workers interact in nursing homes with people living with dementia – as of 2024, an estimated 46% of nursing home residents nationally have Alzheimer's or other dementia.²

More direct care workers will be needed in the years ahead as Maryland's population ages and the prevalence of dementia increases. Currently, the direct care workforce faces staffing challenges driven by persistently low compensation. The median annual wage for Maryland nursing assistants was \$35,760 in 2022, and short staffing can lead to poor quality of care. These issues are especially concerning as the acuity levels of care have increased in recent years for nursing home residents. Maryland must take action to address concerns among this workforce and the impacts on our most vulnerable adults.

SB 679 takes a step to addressing these concerns. Currently, there is limited transparency on how Maryland's nursing homes' spend their revenue (including the revenue from Medicare and Medicaid funding). SB 679 establishes increased fiscal transparency for nursing homes to ensure Marylanders are aware of how much money is being invested in direct care and worker wages.

SB 679 is an important step to improve jobs for our direct care workers in nursing homes and improve the safety and the quality of care for some of Maryland's most vulnerable adults. The Alzheimer's Association urges a favorable report on SB 223. Please contact Megan Peters, Director of Government Affairs at mrpeters@alz.org with any questions.

¹ 2024 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures

<https://www.alz.org/getmedia/76e51bb6-c003-4d84-8019-e0779d8c4e8d/alzheimers-facts-and-figures.pdf>

² National Center for Health Statistics. Biennial Overview of Post-acute and Long-term Care in the United States. Available at: <https://data.cdc.gov/d/wibz-pb5q>