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**HB 1142 Public Health - Maryland Interested Parties Advisory Group – Establishment  
House Health and Government Operations Committee  
March 5, 2025  
FAVORABLE**

Good afternoon, Chair Peña-Melnyk and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee. My name is Tammy Bresnahan, and I serve as the Senior Director of Advocacy for AARP Maryland. On behalf of over two million Marylanders aged 50 and over, I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak in strong support of HB 1142. We also extend our appreciation to Delegate Bagnall for sponsoring this important legislation.

AARP Maryland is dedicated to ensuring that older Marylanders have access to the care they need to remain in their homes and communities with dignity and independence. HB 1142 strengthens the Maryland Interested Parties Advisory Group (IPAG) by codifying its role within the Maryland Department of Health and expanding its duties to address critical issues affecting Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS).

### **The Importance of HB 1142 for Older Marylanders**

For many older Marylanders, Medicaid-funded home and community-based services are a lifeline, allowing them to age in place rather than entering costly institutional settings. However, challenges persist in securing a sufficient, well-trained, and fairly compensated direct care workforce to meet the growing demand for services. HB 1142 takes a significant step forward in ensuring that Medicaid payment rates support an adequate and qualified direct care workforce, which is essential for sustaining HCBS in Maryland.

The bill also mandates an annual review of employment standards, barriers to care, and disparities impacting direct care workers and consumers. These provisions align with AARP's long-standing advocacy for policies that improve care quality, workforce stability, and equitable access to services for all older adults, particularly those facing economic and health-related disparities.

### **AARP Policy Alignment**

AARP supports policies that:

- Ensure older adults have access to affordable, high-quality HCBS so they can remain in their homes and communities.
- Strengthen and stabilize the direct care workforce through competitive wages, training opportunities, and improved working conditions.

- Reduce disparities in access to care by identifying and addressing systemic barriers that affect both caregivers and those receiving care.

HB 1142 directly supports these priorities by requiring the Maryland Department of Health to assess Medicaid payment rates, improve employment standards for direct care workers, and develop a public education plan to inform consumers and caregivers about IPAG's work.

## **Conclusion**

This bill is a necessary and proactive step in ensuring that Maryland's long-term care system is prepared to meet the needs of a growing aging population. AARP Maryland respectfully urges a favorable report on **HB 1142** to help strengthen home and community-based services and support the dedicated workforce that makes independent living possible for so many older Marylanders.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions, you can reach me at [tbresnahan@aarp.org](mailto:tbresnahan@aarp.org) or by calling 310-302-8451.