



HB 1478
Public Health - Home Health Care Providers – Directory
March 11, 2025
Position: FAV

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and members of Health, Government, & Operations Committee:

My name is Ricarra Jones, and I am the Political Director of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. We are the largest healthcare workers union in the nation – representing 10,000 healthcare workers in long-term care facilities and hospitals across Maryland. We are proud members of the Caring Across Maryland coalition supporting HB 1478 with sponsor amendments and we urge the Committee to issue a favorable report.

HB 1478 will support Maryland families and patients who need home care services find the worker that best meets their need based on language, certification, or training. HB 1478 will help consumers contact the residential service agency (RSA) that employs the worker to establish care. With over 2,000 licensed RSAs in the state and over 51,000 home care workers, consumers are overwhelmed trying to find sustainable and reliable care. Those who need home care services are continuing to have more diverse needs such as Dementia, Alzheimer's, Developmental Disability, or behavioral health challenges. The registry is a starting place for family and loved ones searching for the care that best meets their needs. Home care or personal care aides provide essential support for individuals with long term conditions or disabilities in people's homes providing assistance with personal care such as bathing, dressing, mobility, toilet care, and eating. Personal Care Aides also help patients with housekeeping, transportation, and social or employment activities outside the home.

HB 1478 will help to build a strong care infrastructure by addressing the care gap. Over 127,000 Maryland residents need help with daily activities such as bathing and dressing. 15% of Maryland's 65+ population has reported difficulties with activities of daily living (ADLs) or instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs), and that need continues to grow. In 2018, PHI predicted that the number of older adults in Maryland would grow by 75% between 2015 and 2045 from 837,500 to nearly 1.5 million. Despite the increasing demand and essential nature of home care, the caregiving work of personal care aides is still not valued- workers receive extremely low pay, few benefits and enjoy limited protections. PHI, a leading national research entity on direct care workforce, predicts that from 2022-2032, Maryland will have 58,300 job openings due to demand and workers leaving the field¹.

There are over 20 matching service home care directories in 12 states². During the pandemic, these states successfully disseminated important information regarding pandemic relief and

¹ "PHI's Workforce Data Center." PHI, 24 Jan. 2025, <https://www.phinational.org/policy-research/workforce-data-center/#var=Employment+Projections&states=24>.

² PHI Matching Service Registries, 2025 [Matching Service Registries - PHI](#)

benefits for essential healthcare workers including home care workers. However, in Maryland, too many home care workers were left behind during the pandemic, unaware of childcare benefits for essential healthcare workers and other COVID-19 related guidance. While some have enhanced user-friendly dashboards that are more expensive, starting with a low-cost spreadsheet maintained on the Maryland Department of Health website will be just as impactful for Maryland families struggling. Howard County has a voluntary home care directory serving Howard County residents that many consumers would like to see expanded state-wide³. This is an important first step towards improving access to home care in Maryland and improving communication with a vital part of the state's healthcare workforce.

HB 1478 follows federal best practices for home and community-based services. In December 2023, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released [guidance](#) advising states about best practices for home care worker registries/directories. CMS emphasizes that, in addition to helping consumers find and match with home care workers, registries can also perform activities related to worker recruitment and retention, and state monitoring of home and community-based services (HCBS).

The lack of a robust care infrastructure in the state leaves consumers struggling to find workers and maintain work relationships with them. Maryland can be at the forefront of supporting the home care work force so that families across the state can rest better knowing their loved ones are in good hands. Establishing a home care worker registry is one important step to address the care gap and build a strong care infrastructure in Maryland. Vote YES on HB 1478 to build a stronger care system for Maryland families.

Sincerely,

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³ [In-Home Care Options | Howard County](#)