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HB 429 Health Care Facilities – Delegating Inspections Authority –Related Institutions and Nursing Homes
House Health and Government Operations Committee
FAVORABLE
February 6, 2025

Good afternoon, Chair Peña-Melnyk and Members of the House Government Operations Committee. I am Tammy Bresnahan, Senior Director of Advocacy for AARP Maryland. AARP Maryland advocates on behalf of over two million Marylanders aged 50 and over. We would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of HB 429. We also extend our appreciation to Vice Chair Cullison for sponsoring HB 429.

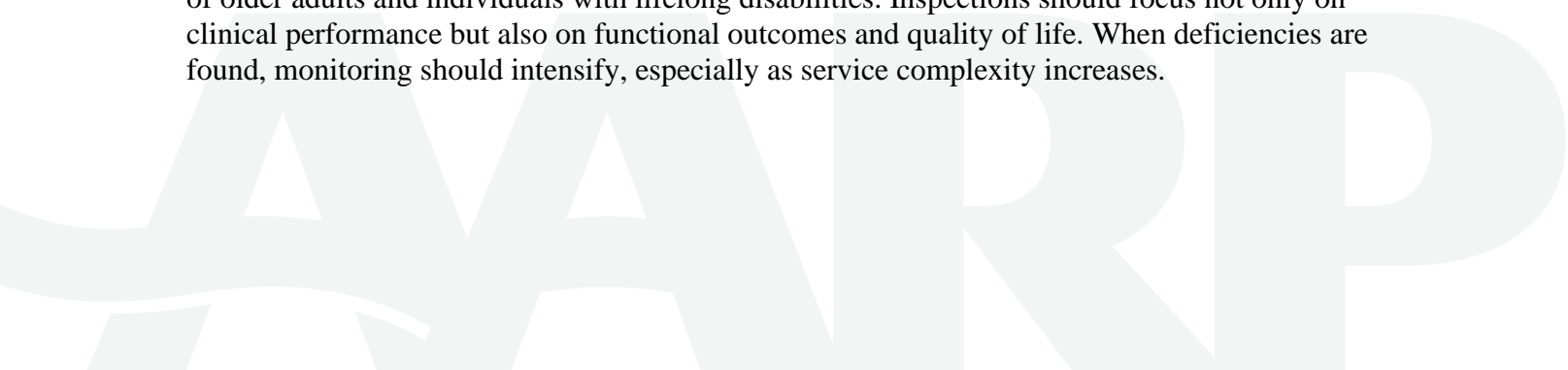
HB 429 requires the Secretary of Health, upon request from a local government, to delegate the authority to inspect, conduct site visits, and perform comprehensive surveys of related institutions and nursing homes.

Maintaining continuous and clear oversight of nursing homes is essential due to the vital role these facilities play in long-term care. Each year, Maryland’s nursing homes serve around 30,000 individuals, many of whom have significant needs requiring 24-hour care, nursing services, assistance with daily living, and rehabilitation therapies. Much of this care is taxpayer-funded, emphasizing the need for accountability and quality assurance.

As of June 2023, Maryland had the nation’s second-highest backlog of overdue annual nursing home inspections, with over 80% of homes delayed by at least 17 months. Alarming, 104 facilities had not been inspected for more than four years, according to CMS data. This inspection delay poses serious risks to resident safety and public trust.

Without consistent oversight, it is difficult to determine whether facilities are providing effective, high-quality care. Enhanced transparency and additional monitoring are critical to address this gap. Regulatory agencies must work collaboratively to ensure bad actors cannot operate unchecked and that residents receive safe, quality care.

To achieve this, states should invest in adequately trained quality monitors who conduct unannounced inspections at least annually, address complaints promptly, and follow up on any identified deficiencies. Monitors should receive specialized training tailored to the unique needs of older adults and individuals with lifelong disabilities. Inspections should focus not only on clinical performance but also on functional outcomes and quality of life. When deficiencies are found, monitoring should intensify, especially as service complexity increases.



AARP believes that collaboration among agencies and transparency in oversight are key to improving resident outcomes and overall care quality.

For these reasons, AARP Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 429. For further questions or follow-up, please feel free to contact me at tbresnahan@aarp.org or **410-302-8451**.