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SB 493 - Nursing Facilities – Involuntary Discharge or Transfer
Senate Finance Committee
February 24, 2026
FAVORABLE

Good afternoon, Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 493, which closes a loophole in the state's involuntary discharge procedures. We thank Chair Beidle for sponsoring this important legislation.

My name is Sara Westrick, Advocacy Director for AARP Maryland, and I am a member of the Oversight Committee on Quality of Care in Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities.

AARP Maryland is one of the largest membership-based organizations in the state, with approximately 850,000 members. We represent the interests of Maryland's over 50 population, including families who rely on nursing home and assisted living care. AARP brings the lived experiences, concerns, and priorities of our members to the discussion table, ensuring that policy decisions reflect the needs of older adults.

AARP Maryland has a long history of advocacy on long-term care issues and is passionate about fixing this oversight in our law and ensuring that some of our most vulnerable residents are not put at risk through unsafe or inappropriate discharges.

Why AARP Supports SB 493

Across the state, residents and families frequently report persons being discharged to unsafe, unsuitable, or unprepared locations. SB 493 directly confronts these harmful practices by requiring that a resident may be discharged only to the specific location listed in the written notice and only after the receiving facility has confirmed it can safely accept the resident. These standards create accountability and prevent the unacceptable practice of discharging individuals to hotels, shelters, or other temporary settings without adequate support.

The bill also modernizes and strengthens Maryland's discharge notice requirements. A standardized notice with clear, complete, and timely information will help residents and families to participate in the process and exercise their rights when necessary. The requirement that notices be updated and that a resident receive at least 30 days' notice before any change ensures transparency and prevents abrupt or unsafe transitions. The notices would also now include the discharge location, appeal instructions, and contact information for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman and Disability Rights Maryland.

SB 493's improvements to post-discharge planning are equally essential. By requiring a detailed plan that is developed with the resident, their care team, and their representative when appropriate, the bill helps guarantee that residents have a stable and medically appropriate place to live after discharge. This focus on safety reflects national best practices and raises the standard of care.

The bill also reinforces important protections for Medicaid beneficiaries by prohibiting facilities from requiring private-pay periods during Medicaid eligibility and from discharging beneficiaries based on payer source. These safeguards are essential so residents who rely on Medicaid receive equal treatment and remain protected from financially motivated removals.

Conclusion

Involuntary discharge is one of the most traumatic events a nursing facility resident can experience. SB 493 creates urgently needed protections that promote safety, transparency, and dignity. For these reasons, AARP Maryland respectfully urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 493.

If you have any questions, please contact Sara Westrick at swestrick@aarp.org or by calling 410-310-0374.