



Empowering People to Lead Systemic Change
The Protection and Advocacy System for the State of Maryland

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Senate Finance Committee
Senate Bill 663: Nursing Homes – Direct Care Wages and Benefits and Cost Reports

March 3, 2026

POSITION: SUPPORT

Thank you Madame Chair Beidle and Committee Members for the opportunity to provide written testimony for Senate Bill 663. Disability Rights Maryland is the federally designated Protection and Advocacy agency in Maryland, mandated to advance the civil rights of people with disabilities. DRM works to increase opportunities for Marylanders with disabilities to be integrated into their communities, live independently and access high-quality, affordable health care.

The pivotal 1999 *Olmstead v. L.C.* Supreme Court decision prohibited the unnecessary segregation of individuals with disabilities and affirmed the right of people with disabilities to live within their community.¹ However, some individuals with disabilities still reside within nursing homes to receive the care they need. As of 2025, in Maryland, 0.3% of people with disabilities, ages 18-64, reside within nursing homes.² The rate is even higher for people with disabilities over the age of 65, at 6.9%.³

Unfortunately, within these facilities, residents, regardless of their disability, experience a low quality of care that impacts their overall well-being. As of January 2026, over 30% of nursing homes in Maryland have been found by the Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ) to have serious deficiencies that caused immediate jeopardy to resident health or safety.⁴ Past reports include failure to ensure that residents had adequate supervision to prevent falls with serious injury, leading to the death of a resident,⁵ and failure to follow a physician's order for blood glucose monitoring that led to the hospitalization of an unresponsive resident.⁶

Though there are multiple causes for these deficiencies, a primary driver includes insufficient investment in the direct care workforce. Nursing homes are severely understaffed, with Maryland's statewide average for staffing being 3.9 hours per resident per day.⁷ Additionally, the

¹ *Olmstead v. LC*, 527 U.S. 581 (1999)

² Rates of Nursing Home Institutionalization Among People with Disabilities Ages 18 to 64, ADA PARC, September 2025

³ Nursing Home, Age 65+, ADA Parc, https://adaparc.shinyapps.io/ADA_PARC/#section-national-data

⁴ Nursing Home Inspect. ProPublica, <https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/state/MD>

⁵ Statement of Deficiencies for Provider 215348, Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Medicaid Services (Survey Data 06/27/2025), <https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/inspections/pdf/nursing-home/215348/health/complaint-inspection?date=2025-06-27>

⁶ Statement of Deficiencies for Provider 215216, Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (Survey Data 10/10/2025) <https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/inspections/pdf/nursing-home/215216/health/complaint-inspection?date=2025-10-10>

⁷ Nursing Home Inspect, ProPublica, <https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/state/MD>

statewide average for nursing staff turnover remains high, at 40.6%.⁸ The staffing shortage, coupled with the high rate of staff turnover, leads to a workforce that cannot adequately provide for the needs of nursing home residents. **By ensuring that at least 75% of a nursing home's total nursing and residential care revenue goes to direct care staff wages and benefits, Senate Bill 0663 will help to ensure that residents are given quality care by requiring that nursing homes sufficiently invest in their direct care workforce.** SB 0663 will also require nursing homes to file an annual cost report with the Maryland Department of Health, starting in 2027, to ensure compliance with the bill's wage and benefits investment. This critical investment and oversight through annual reporting will subsequently improve the safety, quality of care, and overall quality of life for nursing home residents.

In a healthcare system that is already difficult for individuals with disabilities to access, unnecessary barriers need to be broken down. The nursing home industry's inability to provide quality care to its residents, especially individuals with disabilities, is one such barrier. Senate Bill 0663 serves as an important step forward to ensuring that such an obstacle is removed, allowing for nursing home residents with disabilities in Maryland to access the quality care that they not only need, but deserve. In turn, Maryland can help to create a future that allows people with disabilities to feel respected and equal in society.

For these reasons, DRM strongly supports Senate Bill 0663 and urges a favorable report.

Respectfully,

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⁸ Nursing Home Inspect, ProPublica, <https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/state/MD>