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TO: House Health Committee
FROM: LeadingAge Maryland
SUBJECT: House Bill 162, Department of Aging - Maryland Access Point - Dementia-Friendly Communities
DATE: February 5, 2026
POSITION: Favorable

LeadingAge Maryland supports House Bill 162, Department of Aging - Maryland Access Point - Dementia-Friendly Communities.

LeadingAge Maryland is a community of more than 150 not-for-profit aging services organizations serving residents and clients through continuing care retirement communities, affordable senior housing, assisted living, nursing homes and home and community-based services. Members of LeadingAge Maryland provide health care, housing, and services to more than 20,000 older persons each year. Our mission is to be the trusted voice for aging in Maryland, and our vision is that Maryland is a state where older adults have access to the services they need, when they need them, in the place they call home.

LeadingAge Maryland is pleased to offer our strong support for House Bill 162, which aims to create dementia-friendly communities through community-based efforts. As an organization representing not-for-profit aging services providers, we recognize the critical need for the state to support dementia services and promote awareness, education, and inclusivity for individuals living with dementia and their families.

Maryland is home to a rapidly growing population of older adults, with an estimated 110,000 individuals living with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia. As this number continues to rise, it is essential that we prioritize the development of dementia-friendly communities that provide supportive options, foster quality of life, and promote social inclusion.

House Bill 162 takes a crucial step in addressing this need by requiring the Department of Aging to provide resources, training, grants, and other support to the Maryland Access Point network. This will enable the creation of dementia-friendly communities through community-based efforts, ensuring that individuals with dementia and their families have access to the necessary resources and support to thrive.

We applaud the bill's emphasis on public awareness and educational materials, which will help reduce the stigma associated with dementia, promote understanding and empathy, and facilitate specialized training for first responders, local businesses, and community groups. By fostering a more supportive and inclusive environment, we can empower individuals with dementia to maintain social connections, participate in community life, and feel a sense of belonging.

LeadingAge Maryland's members are committed to providing high-quality care and services to individuals with dementia, and we recognize the importance of community-based initiatives in supporting this population. We believe that House Bill 162 aligns with our mission to promote the well-being and dignity of older adults and individuals with disabilities, and we urge the General Assembly to pass this critical legislation.

In conclusion, we strongly support House Bill 162 and its efforts to create dementia-friendly communities in Maryland. We believe that this bill will have a positive impact on the lives of individuals living with dementia and their families, and we look forward to working with the Department of Aging and other stakeholders to ensure its successful implementation.

For these reasons, LeadingAge Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report for House Bill 162.