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March 6, 2026

The Honorable Heather Bagnall  
Chair, Health  
241 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Re: HB 1251 – Health Facilities and Health Insurance – Palliative Care – Required Access and Coverage (Edna G. Neal Palliative Care Act)**

Dear Madam Chair,

The Maryland Commission on Caregiving is pleased to submit this letter of support for HB 1251 – Health Facilities and Health Insurance – Palliative Care – Required Access and Coverage (Edna G. Neal Palliative Care Act). This bill will expand access to palliative care services and increase awareness of these services for individuals living with serious illness and the family caregivers who support them.

Serving as the “voice of the Maryland family caregiver,” the Maryland Commission on Caregiving (“Commission”) is charged with recommending policies that positively impact family caregivers, soliciting and responding to their concerns, and acknowledging their contributions. Many caregivers do not fully understand what palliative care is or know to ask for it, and confusion between palliative care and hospice can deter families from seeking helpful services earlier in the course of illness.

Considering this, the Commission strongly supports efforts to ensure that patients and families are informed about palliative care and have access to supportive services that improve quality of life for both the care recipient and caregiver.

The Commission respectfully wants to raise awareness that palliative care provides a wide range of supportive services that many caregivers do not realize are available, helping families navigate complex care needs and manage serious illness more effectively.

The Commission works to ensure that caregivers across the lifespan are equipped with the resources needed to provide safe care to their loved ones. Expanding access to palliative care will help caregivers better support their loved ones while also receiving the guidance and relief they need.

For these reasons, the Maryland Commission on Caregiving respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 1251.

Sincerely,

The Maryland Commission on Caregiving