

HB962 - WASHINGTON COUNTY NURSING HOMES AND ASSISTED LIVING PROGRAMS

Health and Government Operations Committee

March 4, 2021

Sponsor: Delegate Parrott





Lori Spencer talks to mom Judi Shape on the phone through the window of care center in Seattle, WA

Source: Thompson Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-nursing-homes-insi/insight-inside-one-familys-coronavirus-nightmare-at-seattle-area-nursing-home-idUKKBN21331T>

Problem

- Social isolation has started to be listed as a cause or contributing factor of death certificates¹
- Many individuals in nursing homes and care facilities have gone 300+ days in isolation or strict quarantine, with extremely limited interactions with other residents, family members, or friends
- Additional reason this bill is needed: one of the testifiers who had previously confirmed their availability dropped out earlier this week due to the death of her elderly mother in facility care



Helen, 99 year old Santa Cruz resident, before and 120+ days of isolation
Source: AARP

1. Emily Paulin, AARP, September 3, 2020 <https://www.aarp.org/caregiving/health/info-2020/covid-isolation-killing-nursing-home-residents.html>

- In 2020, several states (Minnesota, Michigan, Indiana, New Jersey, South Dakota, introduced policies to allow designated caregivers the ability to resume regular care with loved ones during the COVID-19 lockdowns²
- Just last month, on February 11, the Indiana Senate just passed a similar measure, SB202 that would require an Essential Family Caregiver Program to be implemented for future public health emergencies, declared emergencies, or other crisis³
- Ontario, Canada, also announced policy in September of 2020 that allowed designated caregivers to help provide essential care for long-term care residents⁴
- This bill is modeled after the Minnesota law which allows individual facilities to set specific guidelines for designated caregivers.
- This bill applies to Washington County only and is a local bill.

2. Andy Markowitz, AARP , August 19, 2020, <https://www.aarp.org/caregiving/health/info-2020/nursing-homes-expand-visits-coronavirus.html>

3. Indiana General Assembly, Senate Bill 202, <http://184.175.130.101/legislative/2021/bills/senate/202#document-3a2f272d> , accessed March 4, 2021

4. Elizabeth Payne, Ottawa Citizen, September 3, 2020, <https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/family-caregivers-will-no-longer-be-locked-out-of-long-term-care-during-covid-outbreaks>

What this bill does:

- Provides that Washington County nursing homes and assisted living facilities will create guidelines for a designated family member/close friend to enter facility and help care and advocate for their loved one.
- Allows nursing homes to set their own guidelines for designated caregivers' protocols required by the facility (could include items such as face masks, gloves, hand washing, social distancing, quarantining, etc.)

Jeffrey A. Cline, President
Terry L. Baker, Vice President
Krista L. Hart, Clerk



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BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

February 23, 2021

Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support of HB 962 – Washington County –
Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Programs – Essential Caregivers

Dear Delegate Pendergrass:

By a vote of 5-0, the Board of County Commissioners of Washington County supports HB 962. The bill would require nursing homes and assisted living programs to establish policies and procedures authorizing visitation by essential caregivers.

The COVID pandemic has caused many heartbreaking circumstances of elderly and vulnerable adults being treated and dying while totally isolated from their family members. It is understandable that skilled nursing facilities need to use quarantine and isolation to protect the residents from widespread infection. However, the resulting isolation imposes a harmful and cruel toll on the mental, physical, and emotional health of the vulnerable adults who are separated from family and essential caregivers on whom they depend.

House Bill 962 strikes a balance of protecting the overall population of the nursing home with the needs of individual residents for visits and care. It requires each facility to consult with the Health Officer to develop procedures and schedules that will meet the needs of the patient and manage the risks to the facility population.

For these reasons, the Board of County Commissioners urges the approval of HB 962.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

BY: 
Jeffrey A. Cline, President

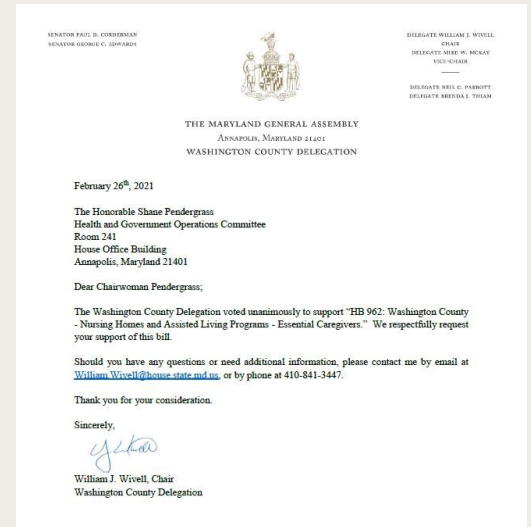
cc (via email): Delegate Neil Parrott

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Local Bill, Local Support

- This bill was unanimously supported by the Washington County Delegation and the Washington County Board of Commissioners also voted unanimously to support this bill
- This bill will have limited effect; there are less than 25 nursing homes in Washington County
- All of the nursing homes we have talked with in the county support this policy and this bill
- In fact, testimony supporting this bill has been shared by both Fahrney-Keedy Nursing Home and Coffman Nursing Home





**Please vote for Grandma:
Please support local courtesy
Please vote for HB 962**

Questions?