



Catholic Charities

SOCIAL CONCERNS • PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY

Legislative Education Group (L.E.G.)

SERVING MARYLAND'S VULNERABLE POPULATIONS FOR OVER 30 YEARS

March 2008

SERVICES FOR THE AGING

Dear L.E.G. Member:

We write asking you to **support (with an amendment)** legislation to allow more older adults who require long-term care services to remain in their homes and communities. The proposal is HB 1379 – Waiver for Older Adults Expansion Fund.

Background:

- The Medicaid Waiver for Older Adults Program helps individuals age 50 and older to remain in their homes or other community settings, even though their age or health condition would warrant living in a nursing home.
- Most seniors want to “age in place,” close to their loved ones and in familiar settings.
- Community services are cost-effective: Medicaid pays about \$60,000 per year for nursing home care, while the average cost of community-based services in the Waiver program is about \$31,000.
- In the program, rather than going to a nursing home, older adults can receive services such as:
 - Personal care, respite care, and home-delivered meals;
 - Assisted living, and personal emergency response systems;
 - Some pharmacy services, medical day care, and home health care; and
 - Medical equipment and supplies.
- Participants must meet financial and technical requirements to qualify.
- Due to limited funding, only about 3,200 people are being served, and over 11,000 are on a waiting list.

HB 1379 Would:

- Establish the Waiver for Older Adults Expansion Fund to allow 250 more people to participate beginning July 1, 2009, compared to the current year.

What the Amendment Will Do:

- Allow the Waiver for Older Adults Expansion Fund to pay for case management for the additional 250 people served, to help ensure that they receive the care they need.

Why Support HB 1379 with this Amendment?

- HB 1379 provides a dedicated funding source so that more vulnerable older adults in Maryland will receive long-term care services without going to a nursing home.
- The amendment will help local offices on aging coordinate the care needed by the additional 250 people served.

OVER→

What YOU can do to HELP...

Before the hearing on Thursday, March 13, 2008, email a brief note to the legislator from your jurisdiction on the House Health and Government Operations Committee (*see list at end of alert*). If your legislator does not serve on the Health and Government Operations Committee, please send a note to the Chairman.

The Honorable Peter Hammen
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
peter.hammen@house.state.md.us

To find your legislator's email, go to <http://mlis.state.md.us/> and click "Contact a legislator."
To find out whom your legislators are, go to <http://mdelect.net/>

A "Sample Alert Letter" is enclosed on the following page.

NOW is the opportunity for us to support this legislation with an amendment to enable more Maryland seniors to remain in their homes and communities and closer to their loved ones. Your action is valuable to individuals who are older, with limited financial means, who need nursing home care, but want to remain at home or in a community setting of their choice.

We are grateful for your willingness to add your voice in support of the Waiver for Older Adults Expansion Fund, with an amendment to fund case management services.

Sincerely,



Allison Stone
L.E.G. Coordinator
Parish Social Ministry

"The only kind of dignity which is genuine is that which is not diminished by the indifference of others."

- Dag Hammararskjold

SAMPLE "ALERT" LETTER

Delegate's Name
House Office Building, Room ____
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Support of HB 1379 (Health Insurance) – Waiver for Older Adults Expansion Fund, *with Amendment*, so more aging Marylanders can remain in their homes and communities

Dear Delegate ____ OR Chairman Hammen:

As a Maryland resident who cares about the well-being Maryland seniors, I support **HB 1379**. Funding to expand the waiver program would allow more people to be served in the community and allow more Marylanders who are aging to receive the vital services they need, without going into a nursing home. I also support an amendment to allow the Expansion Fund to pay for case management services, too.

I believe it is important for the dignity of lower-income individuals, as well as a wise state budget decision to help the older, frailer Marylanders remain in their communities as long as possible. It provides these seniors with an important sense of stability, provides them with a better quality of life, and allows the community to benefit from their presence and wisdom.

[or insert reason to ask support based on your experiences and/or volunteer activities].

I urge you to support HB 1379 with the amendment.

Thank you for considering my views.

Sincerely,

Your Name
Your Address

SAMPLE "ALERT" LETTER

House Health and Government Operations Committee

Chair: The Honorable Peter Hammen
peter.hammen@house.state.md.us

Vice Chair: Shane Pendergrass
shane.pendergrass@house.state.md.us

Wendell Beitzel
wendell.beitzel@house.state.md.us

Joanne Benson
joanne.benson@house.state.md.us

Eric Bromwell
eric.bromwell@house.state.md.us

Robert Costa
bob.costa@house.state.md.us

John Donoghue
john.donoghue@house.state.md.us

Donald Elliott
donald.elliott@house.state.md.us

James Hubbard
james.hubbard@house.state.md.us

A. Wade Kach
a.wade.kach@house.state.md.us

Nicholaus Kipke
nicholaus.kipke@house.state.md.us

Sue Kullen
sue.kullen@house.state.md.us

Patrick McDonough
pat.mcdonough@house.state.md.us

Heather Mizeur
heather.mizeur@house.state.md.us

Karen Montgomery
karen.montgomery@house.state.md.us

Dan Morhaim
dan.morhaim@house.state.md.us

Shirley Nathan-Pulliam
shirley.nathan.pulliam@house.state.md.us

Nathaniel Oaks
nathaniel.oaks@house.state.md.us

Joseline Pena-Melnyk
joseline.pena.melnyk@house.state.md.us

Kirill Reznik
kirill.reznik@house.state.md.us

Daniel Riley
daniel.riley@house.state.md.us

Shawn Tarrant
shawn.tarrant@house.state.md.us

Veronica Turner
veronica.turner@house.state.md.us

Richard Weldon
richard.weldon@house.state.md.us