



**Testimony of the Alzheimer's Association
Greater Maryland and National Capital Area Chapters**

On

**HB1415 - Health Facilities - Residential Service Agencies - Compliance with
State Labor Laws**

POSITION: FAVORABLE

Dear Chairman Davis and Vice-Chair Dumais,

My name is Eric Colchamiro, and I am the Director of Government Affairs for the Alzheimer's Association in Maryland. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House bill 1415.

This legislation, if passed into law, will address the shortage of personal care aides by: improving job quality and reducing misclassification of personal care employees as independent contractors; improve the quality of care that Marylanders receive by reducing turnover of their personal care aides; help the state ensure that RSAs receiving state Medicaid money use it to create decent jobs that don't violate Marylanders' rights, and help RSAs avoid costly lawsuits by ensuring that all RSAs have access to correct information about how Maryland employment law applies to their industry.

The Alzheimer's Association—representing over 110,000 Marylanders with Alzheimer's and related forms of dementia—believes that **the most important determinant of quality dementia care is direct care workers**. Poor job quality that these workers face from some RSA providers—including minimum wage, lack of appropriate training to meet the needs of their patient population (including individuals with Alzheimer's and related dementia), and misclassification as independent contractors--hurts the quality of care that people with Alzheimer's receive.

Through their close interactions with people with dementia, direct care workers gain an in-depth knowledge of the individual with dementia, including their preferences, behaviors and functioning. **These workers help to shape the daily lives of people with dementia; yet some RSA providers do not invest in giving them the wages, knowledge, or benefits to succeed.**

I urge a favorable report on this important legislation. Thank you.

Eric Colchamiro
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