

VETOES

Nationally, there has been a tremendous concern about the conditions and standards in board and care homes. Recent Congressional studies have revealed that many board and care homes are not equipped with fire safety equipment, inappropriately use chemical and physical restraints, and are unsanitary and ill-kept. Elderly and mentally disabled residents of homes have been found to be particularly vulnerable because they are usually poor, frequently have no place else to go, and are unlikely to have friends or relatives to look out for their welfare. In the last 12 months alone, the Department of Health and mental Hygiene has been forced to close three domiciliary care homes.

Consequently, the growing trend in this country is to begin licensing at a lower, rather than higher number of residents. The national average size requirement for licensure is three residents, and only three states use six residents as the starting point for licensure. If Maryland raises the number to seven before licensure is required, we would be moving opposite of this national trend.

While I know the sponsors' intent is good, I believe the Office on Aging has raised serious concerns regarding the impact House Bill 709 may have on the health and welfare of residents in an unlicensed domiciliary care home. I share, however, the sponsors' desire to encourage the development of domiciliary care homes and by this letter, I am directing the Office on Aging to work with the sponsors on this important issue.

For the above reasons, I have decided to veto HB 709.

Sincerely,
William Donald Schaefer
Governor

House Bill No. 709

AN ACT concerning

Domiciliary Care Homes - Care Provided

FOR the purpose of altering the number of residents that may be provided care in registered and licensed domiciliary care homes; specifying that registered and licensed domiciliary care homes may provide certain services; specifying that domiciliary care homes may not admit or retain certain residents; and generally relating to the care provided in domiciliary care homes.