

Preamble

WHEREAS, Approximately 4 million Americans – 1 in 10 persons over age 65 and nearly half of those over age 85, as well as a small percentage of people in their 40's and 50's – have Alzheimer's disease; and

WHEREAS, In a 1993 national survey 19 million Americans say they have a family member with Alzheimer's disease, and 37 million know someone with Alzheimer's; and

WHEREAS, 70,000 Maryland residents have Alzheimer's disease or a related disorder; and

WHEREAS, In the United States, approximately \$100 billion a year is spent on care for Alzheimer's disease and neither Medicare nor private health insurance covers the long-term care most persons with Alzheimer's need; and

WHEREAS, 7 of 10 persons with Alzheimer's disease live at home, more than 75% of home care is provided by family and friends, and the remainder is paid care costing an average of \$12,500 per year, with families paying almost all of the cost out-of-pocket; and

WHEREAS, Nationally, half of all nursing home patients suffer from Alzheimer's disease or a related disorder, and the average cost of care in a nursing home is \$42,000 per year; and

WHEREAS, In Maryland, nursing home expenditures account for 89% of Medicaid long-term care spending and 27% of the total Medicaid provider reimbursements budgeted for Fiscal Year 1999; and

WHEREAS, The long-term care system should accommodate the preferences of consumers who prefer to remain independent and in their own homes and the community for as long as possible; and

WHEREAS, States such as Wisconsin, Oregon, and Colorado that have made a concerted commitment to home- and community-based care have reduced projected nursing home use between 18% and 39% and have saved 9% to 23% in projected long-term care costs; and

WHEREAS, The State-funded respite program of the Department of Human Resources, established by the General Assembly in 1988, served over 700 functionally disabled individuals in 1997, yet still has over 200 individuals on a waiting list; now, therefore,

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article - Health - General

1-101.

(a) In this article the following words have the meanings indicated.