

Office of Aging - Independent Agency

I am a geriatrician at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. I take care of older adults in their homes by doing home visits once people can no longer get to the doctor. Home visits are an essential part of helping people “age in place.” Most current elders and younger people (future elders) want to be able to remain in their own homes as they age, or at the very least in their own communities. Baltimore is a city of communities and attachment one’s neighborhood is often deeply engrained. Having to move away to a nursing home or assisted living can be devastating.

I support creating an independent agency outside of the health department for aging in Baltimore because the needs of elders, such as aging in place, go beyond health. Meeting health needs in a person’s home is essential for aging in place, however, there is also much more required for aging in place including the built environment (such as elder friendly neighborhood planning and home modifications), social services, and personal care. For the elders that I see, a lack of access to personal care is their greatest need. Personal care is the kind of care that doesn’t require a nurse and a family member, friend, or paid caregiver often provides— bathing, cooking, cleaning, dressing, changing, feeding. These are the services our elders need to be able to age in place. Baltimore needs more trained people who can work as personal care aides and financing make this care affordable.

I support this bill because I want to elevate and address the needs of elders and because their needs include, but also go beyond healthcare.

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