

**Leisure World of Maryland
Social Work Department**

January 26, 2026

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to strongly urge continued and expanded funding for the Department of Health and Human Services Respite Care Program. I serve as the Director of Social Work at Leisure World, a Montgomery County community of more than 9,000 residents aged 55 and older.

The Respite Care Program is an essential lifeline for our residents and their caregivers. Many of the seniors we serve are living with significant physical limitations, cognitive impairment, and complex emotional health needs. Their caregivers—often spouses or family members—rely on respite services to maintain their own health, prevent burnout, and sustain caregiving arrangements that allow seniors to remain safely in their homes.

In recent years, funding for the Respite Care Program has consistently been exhausted by March, forcing our department to suspend new applications until funding resumes in July. We have now been informed that funding has again run out for this year. As a result, seniors and caregivers who urgently need support will be placed on a waitlist until July 2026. For many families, this delay is simply untenable and may lead to caregiver collapse, unnecessary hospitalizations, or premature institutional placement.

The demand for respite care continues to grow, yet funding levels have not kept pace with the needs of our aging population. Without sufficient and continuous funding, this vital program cannot fulfill its mission, and the most vulnerable members of our community are left without critical support.

I respectfully ask that you consider allocating additional funding to ensure uninterrupted access to the Respite Care Program. Doing so would have a profound and immediate impact on the well-being of seniors, caregivers, and the broader community they depend on.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter and for your continued commitment to supporting older adults in Montgomery County.

Sincerely,
Susan Montgomery, LCSW-C

