



Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network

MSCAN

AARP Maryland

Alzheimer's
Association,
Maryland Chapters

Baltimore Jewish
Council

Catholic Charities

Central Maryland
Ecumenical Council

Church of the Brethren

Episcopal Diocese of
Maryland

Housing Opportunities
Commission of
Montgomery County

Jewish Community
Relations Council of
Greater Washington

Lutheran Office on
Public Policy in
Maryland

Maryland Association of
Area Agencies on Aging

Maryland Catholic
Conference

Mental Health
Association of Maryland

Mid-Atlantic LifeSpan

National Association of
Social Workers,
Maryland Chapter

Presbytery of Baltimore

The Coordinating
Center

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SB 192

Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2020

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
February 26, 2020

Oppose

MSCAN is a statewide coalition of advocacy groups, service providers, faith-based and mission-driven organizations that supports policies that meet the housing and care needs of Maryland's low and moderate-income senior citizens.

MSCAN strongly urges the committee to reject the provisions in the BRFA that reduce Medicaid provider rates, as well as language that threatens the funding of the Community Health Resources Commission (CHRC).

MSCAN opposes language in the BRFA which would reduce Medicaid provider rates. (Page 16 lines 9 and 18, page 17 line 11). The Heroin and Opioid Prevention Effort (HOPE) and Treatment Act of 2017 and the subsequent minimum wage legislation of 2019 provide multi-year reimbursement rate increases for behavioral health services and other Medicaid providers. However, the Governor's FY 2021 budget reduces that reimbursement rate to two percent, which falls far short of the required four percent increase for FY 2021. These rate cuts impact the continuum of senior care services, including nursing homes, medical adult day care services, home- and community-based services, and personal care services. These are vital programs for low-income seniors, and reducing the rates of these providers threatens the availability of these services. As the number of older adults has been consistently rising in Maryland - by 2030, Maryland's older adult population is anticipated to increase to 1.7 million - this rapid increase will require an unprecedented need in senior care support services. The state should dedicate more resources to expanding access to support services for our older adults - not less.

MSCAN opposes language in the BRFA which threatens funding for the Community Health Resources Commission (CHRC). (Page 17 lines 30-32; page 18 lines 1-8; page 19 lines 13-32; page 20 lines 1-14). Since the passage of the Affordable Care Act, the health care landscape in Maryland has dramatically changed. Although over 90% of Marylanders have health insurance coverage, there are still gaps in access to health care throughout the state – especially for low-income seniors. CHRC grantees have done innovative work for older adults, such as providing mobile fresh food for seniors, providing geriatric primary care services for home-bound low-income seniors, and providing dental care for low-income seniors. Reorganizing and reducing the funding for the CHRC eliminates the ability of community providers to fill gaps in the health care system, which ultimately harms low-income seniors in our state.

MSCAN urges the committee to fully fund Medicaid provider rates, and fund the Community Health Resources Commission using the current formula in statute.