



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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Testimony in Support of SB 897 - Maryland Department of Health - Residential Service Agencies - Training Requirements

Senate Finance Committee

March 5th, 2020

Good afternoon, my name is Carol Lienhard, and I am the now retired/former Director of the Harford County Office on Aging. I am here today on behalf of the Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network (MSCAN), a statewide coalition that supports policies that meet the housing and care needs of Maryland's low and moderate-income seniors.

This legislation which would mandate that residential service agencies (RSA) in Maryland provide their direct care and administrative staff with five hours of initial training related to dementia care, and have two hours of continuing education for staff every year. It provides topic area guidelines for that training, and seeks to improve the quality of care for the 1 in 3 seniors who have dementia.

There are over 1200 residential service agencies in Maryland who:

- Do not have an annual check on their quality by the State Health Department, like other providers of dementia care;
- Do not have required training on dementia care, like other providers;
- Do mainly utilize direct care workers, who are paid \$11.65 per hour, according to supportive testimony of this legislation by the Public Justice Center;
- Do have significant staff turnover; the most recent data from the American Health Care Association estimated that 50% of these workers leave annually;

These RSA operators are not all bad actors. I welcome the providers testifying today who support this legislation, and Leading Age—an association of providers which includes RSAs—which has offered written testimony in support of this bill.

But I do want the for-profit providers to look beyond their bottom line, and look at how we can best treat the over 110,000 Marylanders with Alzheimer's and the countless others with different forms of dementia. And I want them to realize that investing in their workforce—both in wages and in training—equips them to provide better care, likely increases their job satisfaction, and may help them to prevent turnover.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill. I respectfully request a favorable report on this legislation.