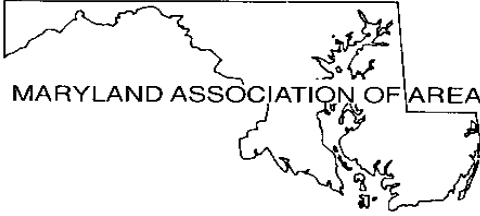


M 4 A



Gina Valentine
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Representing Carroll County
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Representing Harford County
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Laura Riley, Treasurer
Representing Baltimore County
Department of Aging

Karrisa Gouin, Secretary
Representing Anne Arundel County
Department of Aging and Disabilities

Health & Government Operations Committee – Bill Hearing January 23, 2025

Legislation: HB 36 Department of Aging – Aging Services – Program Repeal and Consolidation

Position: Support with Amendment

The nineteen member organizations of the Maryland Association of Area Agencies on Aging (M4A) serve Maryland’s older and disabled citizens, providing a range of cost-effective state, federal and locally funded programs that help individuals remain secure in the community with dignity, independence, and choice as they age. M4A and its associated Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) represent the “front line” in Maryland’s challenge to meet the complex and varied needs of well over 1 million older adults statewide. M4A’s goal is to ensure communication and collaboration with all partners to maximize the resources available to those we serve.

M4A supports House Bill 36 with amendments. Overall, consolidation of these programs has the potential to streamline operations, reduce administrative overhead, and provide flexibility for local AAAs to meet the differing needs of our communities. Senior Care, Senior Assisted Living Subsidy, and Congregate Housing Services Program are essential safety net services meeting the needs of people who largely are ineligible for Medicaid, but still cannot afford services to help them stay in their homes, in the community.

The bill calls for the implementation of the consolidation to take place in July 2026. M4A requests three amendments.

1. First, we ask a clarification in a definition.

On page 2, in line 9, insert:

- (b) “Area agency ON AGING” means the local agency...

(over)

2. Second, we request language that will require the Maryland Department of Aging to engage stakeholders, including AAAs, in developing a plan to implement the new Supports for Older Adults with Resources (SOAR) program.

On page 7, after line 7, insert:

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Department shall engage with key stakeholders, beginning May 2025, including area agencies on aging, to conduct program transition planning and to co-design the new, consolidated program.

3. Finally, we request language that ensures that Marylanders currently receiving services through any of the three programs being combined are not lost to care.

On page 7, after line 7, insert:

SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That individuals enrolled in the Senior Care, Senior Assisted Living Subsidy, and Congregate Housing Services Programs at the time of the transition into the new consolidated program shall continue to receive those services, with the assistance of the area agencies on aging.

For the reasons stated herein, M4A supports HB 36 with the above amendments.