



TO: House Health and Government Operations Committee
FROM: LeadingAge Maryland
SUBJECT: Senate Bill 212, Department of Aging – Aging Services – Program Repeal and Consolidation
DATE: March 20, 2025
POSITION: Favorable

LeadingAge Maryland supports Senate Bill 212, Department of Aging – Aging Services – Program Repeal and Consolidation

LeadingAge Maryland is a community of more than 150 not-for-profit aging services organizations serving residents and clients through continuing care retirement communities, affordable senior housing, assisted living, nursing homes and home and community-based services. Members of LeadingAge Maryland provide health care, housing, and services to more than 20,000 older persons each year. Our mission is to be the trusted voice for aging in Maryland, and our vision is that Maryland is a state where older adults have access to the services they need, when they need them, in the place they call home. We partner with consumers, caregivers, researchers, public agencies, faith communities and others who care about aging in Maryland. LeadingAge Maryland represents the vast majority of CCRCs in the state.

This departmental bill repeals the requirement that the Secretary of Aging develop congregate housing services and assisted living programs for seniors; instead, the Maryland Department of Aging (MDOA) must develop, coordinate, and administer a consolidated program to provide specified services. The bill repeals the Interagency Committee on Aging Services and instead transfers specified committee responsibilities to MDOA and clarifies and expands those responsibilities. Beginning in June 2025, MDOA must engage with key stakeholders to conduct program transition planning and co-design the new consolidated program, as well as develop transition plans for specified individuals. The bill replaces references to “seniors” with “older adults” in specified sections of the Human Services Article and specifies that an “area agency” is an “area agency on aging.” The bill must be construed to apply only prospectively and may not be applied or interpreted to have any effect on or application to any cause of action arising before the effective date of the bill.

LeadingAge Maryland supports Senate Bill 212 for the following reasons:

- Addressing overlaps in services: Specifically, the Senior Care Program and Congregate Housing Services Program (CHSP) both provide similar in-home community support services, including food, laundry, personal care, and transportation. The overlap creates inefficiencies by duplicating administrative efforts and potentially confusing eligibility or service access for older adults. Consolidation would streamline service delivery, ensuring that resources are used more effectively and allowing the state to focus on a single, unified system for community support services.
- Increasing flexibility and person-centered care: A consolidated program could allow older adults to access a broader range of services tailored to their circumstances, whether they live in apartments, homes, or assisted living facilities, without the constraints of rigid program categories. Also, the bill reduced administrative costs and burden. Each program currently operates with its own administrative structure, resulting in unnecessary costs and bureaucratic complexity. By combining these programs, administrative functions such as eligibility determination, service coordination, and oversight could be centralized, leading to cost savings and improved service coordination.
- Addressing Declining Provider Participation: Both the Senior Assisted Living Subsidy and CHSP suffer from declining provider participation, likely due to complex requirements, low reimbursement rates, or burdensome reporting. Consolidation could create an opportunity to revamp the subsidy structure and simplify provider participation requirements, making it more attractive for providers to remain involved and deliver services. It could also enable the state to negotiate better contracts or create incentives for providers to serve more low-income seniors.
- Enhancing Equity in Service Delivery: Consolidation would enable the state to apply consistent eligibility criteria and asset limits, reducing disparities in who can access services and how much support they receive. For example, the asset limit for CHSP is currently more than double that of the Senior Care Program, which can create inequities in access to services. A unified program could establish fairer and more uniform guidelines.
- Preventing Fund Reversion: The Senior Care Program reverts unused funds, indicating that resources are not being fully utilized due to inefficiencies or gaps in service delivery. A consolidated program could improve fund allocation and utilization by expanding eligibility or broadening the range of services offered, ensuring that available resources are used to meet growing needs.
- Aligning with Broader Policy Trends: Many states are moving toward integrated models of care for older adults to reduce fragmentation, improve outcomes, and ensure that seniors can age in place with dignity. By consolidating these programs, Maryland would be better positioned to pursue federal funding or grants that reward innovative, integrated aging services.

Consolidating the Senior Care Program, Senior Assisted Living Subsidy, and Congregate Housing Services Program into a single, streamlined program would reduce administrative burden, eliminate service redundancies, enhance person-centered care, and make better use of available funds. By adopting this approach, Maryland can improve the efficiency and equity of its aging services, ensuring that more older adults can access the support they need in a sustainable and cost-effective manner

For these reasons, LeadingAge Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report for Senate Bill 212.

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