



# *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 HB 456 - Public Health Outreach Programs- Cognitive Impairment, Alzheimer's Disease and Other Types of Dementia**

**House Health and Government Operations Committee**

**February 12, 2020**

**Support**

The Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network (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 seniors.

MSCAN enthusiastically supports HB 456 which will mandate that information on Alzheimer's Disease and related disorders be included by the State Department of Health in its relevant public health outreach programs to educate health care providers and the public.

The incidence of Alzheimer's and dementia is a critical public health crisis in Maryland where 110,000 people suffer from these diseases and the numbers are expected to grow dramatically in the coming years. Care for these individuals costs Maryland over \$1 billion annually in Medicaid dollars.

This bill is designed to work smarter, not harder by incorporating information about areas such as early detection and diagnosis, along with how to reduce cognitive decline, into the Department of Health's relevant programs. It harnesses the resources of the Alzheimer's Association, the state Alzheimer's Council, and the state Department of Aging to allow the Health Department to best disseminate information statewide, to help with the development of information to be presented in these programs.

Ninety-five percent of individuals with Alzheimer's and related dementia are 65 and older, and this legislation has enormous potential to help them. If the state incorporates messaging about the connection to cognitive health in its anti-smoking campaigns, we can reduce the incidence of dementia. If the Maryland Primary Care Program hosts a webinar for providers on the Medicare Care Planning billing code for individuals with cognitive impairment, we help seniors. And if the state's campaign and outreach on hypertension was to include messaging about the link between this chronic disease and cognitive health, it would reduce the incidence of dementia and help seniors. We believe that all of these examples could be accomplished with existing resources and would make a difference in the fight against Alzheimer's and dementia.

MSCAN respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 456. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.