

**Support for SB 407 – Office of the Attorney General – Senior and
Vulnerable Adult Asset Recovery Unit**
**Maryland Coalition on Mental Health and Aging,
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 12, 2020**

The Mental Health Association of Maryland (MHAMD) is a voluntary, non-profit citizens' organization concerned with all aspects of behavioral health. MHAMD's Coalition on Mental Health and Aging is comprised of representatives from aging, mental health, consumer, family and professional associations and government agencies working together to improve the quality and accessibility of behavioral health assessment, treatment, recovery and illness prevention services for older Marylanders.

Crimes of abuse and fraud against vulnerable and older Marylanders are on the rise. It is not uncommon for members of our coalition to share horrific stories of older adults who lose property and assets because they have been unknowing victims of crime. In many instances not only have victims lost dignity, victims have critical financial security.

Presently, the Office of Attorney General is under-resourced to properly and fully respond to crimes against vulnerable and older adults. SB 407 addresses shortcomings by establishing a "Senior and Vulnerable Adult Asset Recovery Unit" within the Office of the Attorney General. The bill requires funds in the amount of at least \$250,000 for each fiscal year after 2021 to cover costs of hiring new staff and investigating and assisting with prosecution by the unit.

We believe Maryland needs to be doing more to protect older and vulnerable adults and to act in their best interest when they have become victims of crime. The recovery of assets can make all the difference in how older victims live out the rest of their lives. If assets aren't recovered, we can at least strive for some semblance of justice. For all that our older Marylanders have given us, they deserve our protection.

The Maryland Coalition on Mental Health and Aging urges your favorable report on SB 407.
Thank you for the opportunity to share our position.

