



Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Acting Secretary

**Maryland Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers & Speech-Language Pathologists**  
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**2021 SESSION  
POSITION PAPER**

**BILL NO: HB 119**  
**COMMITTEE: Health and Government Operations**  
**POSITION: Support**

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**TITLE:** Maryland Department of Health – Public Health Outreach Programs – Cognitive Impairment, Alzheimer’s Disease, and Other Types of Dementia

**BILL ANALYSIS:** This bill serves to require the Maryland Department of Health, in partnership with the Department of Aging and others, to incorporate education regarding cognitive impairment, Alzheimer’s disease and other types of Dementia into relevant consumer outreach programs they administer.

**POSITION AND RATIONALE:**

The Maryland Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Hearing Aid Dispensers (the “Board”) submits this support position for House Bill 119 - Maryland Department of Health - Public Outreach Programs - Cognitive Impairment, Alzheimer’s Disease, and Other Types of Dementia.

Alzheimer’s and other forms of dementia can be devastating for the affected individuals and for their families and loved ones. Audiologists and related professionals recognize a correlation between untreated hearing loss and cognitive impairment.<sup>1</sup> A recent study has shown that hearing loss is among the most significant, potentially modifiable risk factors for dementia.<sup>2</sup> As the regulatory body for audiological professions, the Board believes that this bill proposes important measures toward educating health care professionals and the public about early warning signs of cognitive decline. The Board is tasked with protecting the health, safety and

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<sup>1</sup> Lin, Frank, et. al. “Hearing Loss and Incident Dementia.” *Archives of Neurology*, (February 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Livingston, Gill, et. al. “Dementia Prevention, Intervention, and Care: 2020 Report of the Lancet Commission.” *The Lancet Commissions*, Vol. 396, Issue 10248, p. 413-446. (August 8, 2020).

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welfare of the public by regulating the audiological and related professions to the highest possible standard. With this mission in mind, the Board respectfully requests a favorable report of HB 119.

Thank you for your consideration of the Board's position. If you have any additional questions, please contact the Board's Executive Director, Dr. Candace G. Robinson, Au.D., at [Candace.Robinson@maryland.gov](mailto:Candace.Robinson@maryland.gov) or 443-915-7981.

*The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration*