



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 119 - Public Health Outreach Programs- Cognitive Impairment, Alzheimer's Disease and Other Types of Dementia

House Health and Government Operations Committee January 19, 2021

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 119 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. Recent research shows that Alzheimer's disease disproportionately affects the Black and Latino populations, so this program would be especially helpful to them. Care for these individuals is costly in public health care dollars and a huge burden on families and caregivers.

This bill is designed to work smarter, not harder by incorporating Alzheimer's education into the Department of Health's already existing programs. It develops a partnership with the Alzheimer's Association to help with the development of information to be presented in these programs.

This bill will expand knowledge of the importance of annual wellness visits for cognitive health leading to early detection of impairment as well as increased awareness of early warning signs of dementia -- of benefit to all Marylanders.

This bill could lead to increased emphasis on dementia in the Department of Health's Annual Health Equity conference, increased data in the Health Department's information system which could help map the incidence of Alzheimer's disease across the state. This bill could also encourage the MD Primary Care Program to incorporate dementia care, early detection and diagnosis into its educational sessions.

MSCAN respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 119. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.