



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 House Bill 548 Human Services - Trauma-Informed Care - Commission and Training House Health and Government Operations Committee February 9, 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.

House Bill 548 would establish a Commission on Trauma-Informed Care, tasked with prioritizing the trauma-responsive and trauma-informed delivery of State services that impact children, youth, families, and older adults. MSCAN supported this bill last year and we are glad to see that the suggested amendments to include older adults have been incorporated into HB 548 this year, as well as language to include a geriatric mental health clinician with expertise in trauma on the Commission.

Older Marylanders of low income who are struggling with housing and health care needs have higher rates of trauma in their histories than older Marylanders who are not having those struggles. Members of MSCAN firmly believe that public services targeting older adults need to be trauma informed, just as they should be for children and youth.

Recently, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) required nursing homes to become trauma-informed and to provide trauma training to staff. This was done in recognition of the high rates of trauma among the nursing home resident population and the fact that services are more efficacious when they are not re-traumatizing. In Maryland, assisted living regulations are following suit. Given the push for "aging in place", Maryland needs to ensure that community-based programs serving older adults are trauma informed as well.

More broadly, HB 548 seeks to coordinate a statewide initiative to prioritize the trauma-responsive and trauma-informed delivery of state services that impact children, youth, families, and older adults. MSCAN believes that this would bring Maryland agencies a step closer into the growing body of research and best practices supporting trauma informed care at all levels.

Members of MSCAN respectfully and strongly urge the Committee's favorable report on House Bill 548.