



Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network

MSCAN

Testimony in Support of SB27 as Amended

Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia – Council and Coordination of Services (Dementia Services Act of 2022)

**House Health and Government Operations Committee
March 24, 2022**

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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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, health and quality of care needs of Maryland's low and moderate-income seniors.

MSCAN supports SB27: The Dementia Services Act of 2022 would establish and mandate funding for a full-time Director of Dementia Services Coordination at the Maryland Department of Health. The position would be responsible for the coordination of services affecting Marylanders with dementia and their caregivers and families, including: implementing the Maryland Alzheimer's state plan managing the Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Council; identifying and supporting the development of dementia-specific training; and applying for grants to expand and improve services for Marylanders with Alzheimer's and their caregivers.

There is precedent for this position; if enacted, Maryland's point person on dementia would join similar roles in 16 other states, including Virginia and the District of Columbia. This role would work, across government, to aid the 110,000 Marylanders with dementia and their loved ones. Our state spends over \$1.2 billion in Medicaid funding on this chronic disease; it is essential that we begin to build our infrastructure to help Marylanders in need.

The potential for this legislation is significant in how it can help Marylanders. We can look just to the District of Columbia, where DC Health's dementia coordinator is doing significant work including: convening a multi-stakeholder committee to build awareness about their work; re-drafting the District's State Plan on Alzheimer's and Related Dementia; starting a healthy brain website; and launching a public awareness campaign about their work. Maryland can do all of this too, if we devote the resources and build the infrastructure to address dementia.

For the reasons stated above, MSCAN urges a favorable report on SB27. Thank you for your consideration.