



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

*St. Vincent de Paul
Society*

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Testimony in Support of the Maryland Department of Aging Budget Senate Budget and Taxation Committee Hearing – March 6, 2023

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 senior citizens.

MSCAN strongly urges preservation of funding in the budget for all of the cost-effective programs of the Maryland Department of Aging (MDOA) which are vital in meeting the needs of Maryland's 1.4 million and growing senior population. We commend the Department of Aging, through the local Area Agencies on Aging (AAA's), for dedication to important goals which will enable older Marylanders and adults with disabilities to remain independent in their homes with dignity for as long as possible. The AAA's have remained true to the mandate of the federal Older Americans Act, through which they are funded, "to provide services with preference given to older individuals with the greatest economic and social need with particular attention to low-income minority individuals and older adults residing in rural areas" – with the goal of leaving no senior behind.

We are grateful to the Governor for providing a \$3 million increase in funding for some of our most vital state programs: Senior Care, the Senior Assisted Living Subsidy (SALS) and the Congregate Housing Program. The additional funding for these cost-effective programs will allow the AAA's to move seniors from the lengthy waiting lists or; if needed, to provide additional services to enable Maryland's elderly citizens to remain independent in their communities where they really want to be. These programs save far more money than they cost, which is very good news for taxpayers! For example, the **Senior Care Program** provides supportive services to each client for about \$2500 per year to help seniors stay in their homes. With the Senior Care waiting list averaging 2,100 and an average of 150 seniors going to nursing homes each year before they can Senior Care receive services, the cost is staggering. **With the current annual cost of nursing home care at \$108,258**, institutionalization of just those 150 seniors would **cost the for taxpayers \$16.2 million dollars!** On the other hand, at an average cost of \$2500 per year for a Senior Care client, an **entire waiting list of 2,100 could be served for about \$5.3 million dollars – still saving taxpayers \$10.9 million dollars!**

The **Congregate Housing Services Program** is another program which provides a huge bang for the buck. 600 seniors are served in the program at an average cost of about \$3,000 per year. **With today's nursing home costs over \$9,000 per month, three frail seniors could be served for a WHOLE YEAR for the cost of ONE MONTH in a nursing home!**

We also commend the Governor for an increase of \$1 million for the Information and Assistance Program which is designated for hiring staff and increasing outreach. In addition this funding will be used as federal match for the Maryland Access Point (MAP) Federal Financial Participation (FFP) program to increase the billable service hours, thus enabling the local Area Agencies on Aging to serve even more individuals, their families and caregivers.

MSCAN stands with the Area Agencies on Aging as they remain united in their commitment to provide vital services to vulnerable older and disabled Marylanders. We commend their spirit and their dedication for "getting the job done" in spite of all obstacles!

MSCAN is eagerly looking forward to working with the new Secretary of Aging and we appreciate the opportunity to testify on behalf of the Maryland Department of Aging's budget as implemented through our local Area Agencies on Aging. Thank you for your support of all of their important work.