



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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SB 228

DATE: February 9, 2023

SPONSOR: Senator Beidle

ASSIGNED TO: Finance

CONTACT PERSON: Leslie Frey (leslie.frey@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT (Department of Health and Human Services)

Department of Aging - Dementia Care Coordinator and Dementia Care Navigation Programs

Senate Bill 228 requires each Area Agency on Aging in the State to undertake extensive assessment and support services for individuals with dementia and their caregivers. Specifically, the bill requires the Area Agencies on Aging to: establish a Dementia Care Navigation Program to conduct cognitive assessments for individuals with dementia; provide programs for individuals with dementia; provide support for caregivers of individuals with dementia, including providing assistance with care planning; provide technical assistance to Area Agency on Aging staff who interact with individuals with dementia diagnoses or cognitive changes associated with dementia; act as conduits between health care providers and individuals with dementia and their caregivers; and provide any other appropriate service. To oversee this work, the bill establishes the position of Dementia Care Coordinator in the Maryland Department of Aging who is tasked with providing training and dissemination of best practices to Area Agency on Aging staff and submitting an annual report on the services provided. The bill mandates \$2,400,000 of funding beginning in Fiscal Year 2025 for the Program to be allocated by the Department according to each Area Agency on Aging's population served and need for services.

The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (MCDHHS) recognizes the importance of providing adequate services and supports for residents with dementia and their caregivers. Rates of dementia are on the rise as the population ages. The needs of people with dementia are many and there are often myriad complications associated with their care. Caring for individuals with dementia contributes to higher rates caregiver rates of illness and emotional stress. However, the broad mandates in the bill present policy, implementation, and funding issues that MCDHHS seeks to address through the amendments attached to this testimony.

In order to address the concerns detailed below, MCDHHS respectfully offers the following amendments (attached) notwithstanding any other amendments offered by the bill sponsor:

- **Remove the mandate to establish a Dementia Care Navigation Program in each Area Agency on Aging and enable the establishment on a voluntary basis instead.**

MCDHHS recommends this amendment for the following reasons: *(continued on next page)*

Policy concerns with SB 228:

- Care navigation has not been extensively studied in populations with dementia, where health care workforce innovations are needed as a result of increasing disease prevalence and resulting costs to the health care system.¹
- Patient navigation programs for individuals with dementia do not result in a demonstrable benefit to the individuals who participate compared with those who receive usual care.²

Implementation concerns with SB 228:

- Providing cognitive assessments for individuals with dementia presents a host of liabilities for the Area Agencies on Aging, including the hiring or contracting with appropriately credentialed staff to conduct these assessments as well as the liabilities associated with a doctor-patient relationship and whether conducting a cognitive assessment establishes such a relationship.

Senate Bill 228 is not adequately funded to provide the mandated services it requires:

- Under the bill, the Area Agencies on Aging will be awarded a portion of the \$2.4M allocated in the bill, based on the Agency's size of the population served and the service needs of the population.
- This allocation would be made after the Department on Aging utilizes the same \$2.4M for its responsibilities under the bill as well, resulting in an indeterminately smaller amount of funding to be shared among the State's 19 Area Agencies on Aging to undertake the extensive work required by the bill.

MCDHHS respectfully urges the committee to adopt the amendment to Senate Bill 228 to enable participation in the Dementia Care Navigation Program rather than requiring each Area Agency on Aging to participate.

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<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7004209/#:~:text=Care%20navigation%20typically%20involves%20a,outcomes%20%5B1%2C7%5D>.

² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK571668/>

AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL 228

(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 1, in line 5, strike “**requiring**” and substitute “**enabling**”.

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 2, in line 30, strike “**SHALL**” and insert “**MAY**”.

On page 4, in line 5, after “**AGENCY**” insert “**THAT HAS ESTABLISHED A DEMENTIA CARE NAVIGATION PROGRAM UNDER THIS SUBTITLE**”.