



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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HB 531 Certified Nursing Assistants – Licensing Requirements and Administrative Updates

House Health and Government Operations Committee
February 22, 2023

SUPPORT

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 HB 531, which removes the "Geriatric Nursing Assistant" distinction and replaces it with "Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)" and specifies that CNAs have successfully completed an approved nursing assistant training program.

Maryland is an outlier by having a Geriatric credentialing in addition to the Certified Nursing Assistant certification. In most states, in order to become a CNA, a person completes a state-approved course, a federally required examination, and a state-mandated certification exam. Once someone completes those requirements, they are able to work in a variety of health care settings, including nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Maryland is unique in that it requires an additional examination and certification – Geriatric Nursing Assistant – to work in comprehensive senior care centers. This creates an additional hurdle for nursing homes and assistant living facilities trying to hire staff. HB 531 puts Maryland's nursing assistant credentialing system in line with other states.

HB 531 will help to alleviate the staffing shortages for nursing assistants across the state. Particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, nursing homes and other senior care centers have struggled to maintain sufficient staffing to care for older adults. Removing the additional hurdle for nursing assistants to obtain their Geriatric certification will open up the number of nursing assistants in the pool for staffing. Additionally, it would allow out-of-state CNAs to be qualified to work in Maryland nursing homes and assisted living facilities without having to complete additional certifications. Ultimately, allowing CNAs to work in nursing care facilities will increase the number of qualified staff able to assist and care for seniors and older adults in health care settings in Maryland.

For the reasons stated above, MSCAN urges a favorable report on HB 531.
Thank you for your consideration.