



Wes Moore | Governor

Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor

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**DATE:** March 28, 2023  
**BILL NUMBER:** SB228 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Reader  
**COMMITTEE:** Health and Government Operations Committee  
**BILL TITLE:** Department of Aging – Long-Term Care and Dementia Care Navigation Programs  
**POSITION:** Letter of Information

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The Maryland Department of Aging is supportive of the work that would be developed under this bill and cross-filed HB614. There are two points the Department would like to raise. The first concerns the use of the term “assessment” versus “screening.” The second regards the establishment of relationships with health care providers.

SB228 uses the term “cognitive assessment” (Page 4, Line 5), while HB614 was amended to use the language “cognitive screening.” The Department and local area agencies on aging (AAAs) prefer the term “screening” and request this language be adopted in the final version of this bill. Specialized expertise is required to perform a cognitive assessment. This would be reaching a level of medical work that is not done by the AAAs. This would place a heavy burden on the AAAs to hire appropriately skilled individuals, for which the proposed funding would not be sufficient. A screening does not require the same level of skill and there are various screening tools available that could be utilized for this purpose. If the screening tool indicates there may be a cognitive impairment, then the most appropriate referral would be to an individual’s physician.

Second, the Department would like to clarify its understanding of the language of 10-1302 (B)(6) (Page 4, Line 22). The Department and AAAs would conduct an awareness campaign with health care providers to ensure they are aware of the program. This may include literature provided to individuals at their medical appointments. The Department and the AAAs cannot make referrals.

The Department of Aging looks forward to creating the infrastructure and working with the AAAs to provide these services if the bill is passed.