



# 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 to the House Health and Government Operations Committee HB462 Funding for Wages and Benefits for Nursing Home Workers (Nursing Home Staffing Crisis Funding Act of 2024) Position: Favorable**

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

MSCAN supports HB462, which would require the Governor's proposed budget to include an 8% reimbursement rate increase for providers of certain healthcare services in order to improve wages among direct care workers.

Homecare workers and nursing home staff are leaving the industry at an alarming rate, as many are overworked and underpaid, leading to a vast shortage in care providers at nursing home facilities. A shortage of nurses means lower quality of care, leading to more error and higher mortality rates<sup>1</sup>.

Thousands of older adults in Maryland rely on this industry for care, and as the aging population continues to grow rapidly in our state, it is imperative that we address this issue promptly and comprehensively to ensure the sustained well-being of Maryland's seniors. MSCAN urges the Committee to consider the broader implications of the workforce shortage and advocate for measures that will not only improve wages but also foster a supportive and sustainable environment for healthcare providers.

Investing in higher wages for nursing home workers is not just an ethical imperative; it is also a strategic move for the state of Maryland. Adequate compensation serves as a powerful incentive to attract and retain skilled and compassionate individuals in the caregiving profession. By raising the reimbursement rate for healthcare services, particularly for those directly involved in the care of seniors, we can mitigate the current workforce shortage. A well-compensated and stable workforce is crucial for maintaining high-quality care standards, reducing turnover, and ultimately improving the overall health outcomes for Maryland's older population. Moreover, it can lead to increased job satisfaction, resulting in a more dedicated and motivated workforce that positively impacts the well-being of our seniors, fosters a healthier community, and ultimately reduces the strain on the healthcare system. Allocating resources to uplift nursing home workers financially is an investment in the long-term health and resilience of our state's aging population.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to support HB462.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK493175/#:~:text=Nursing%20shortages%20lead%20to%20errors,patient%2Dto%2Dnurse%20ratios.>