



Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network

MSCAN

AARP Maryland

Alzheimer's
Association,
Maryland Chapters

Baltimore Jewish
Council

Catholic Charities of
Baltimore

Central Maryland
Ecumenical Council

Church of the Brethren

Episcopal Diocese of
Maryland

Housing Opportunities
Commission of
Montgomery County

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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The Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network (MSCAN) is a statewide coalition of advocacy groups, service providers, faith-based and mission-driven organizations that support policies that meet the housing, health, and quality of care needs of Maryland's low and moderate-income seniors.

MSCAN supports SB 240 which establishes the Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ) Stakeholder Advisory Council, a diverse council designed to strengthen accountability, transparency, and safety in Maryland's health care and long-term care facilities.

Marylanders rely on stable, high-quality care environments and robust oversight systems. In recent years, Maryland's oversight of long-term care facilities, many of which provide care for our older adults, has experienced failures. A 2024 federal class-action lawsuit¹ found that 181 nursing facilities, representing 81.5% of Maryland's licensed nursing homes, went at least 16 months without a required inspection, and more than 100 facilities went four years without an annual inspection.

Compounding these oversight challenges is the complexity of nursing home populations. The prevalence of serious mental illness among nursing home residents nationally has increased dramatically in recent years, rising from 10.5% in 2007 to 18.6% in 2017, an 80% increase in just a decade.² Residents with serious mental illness often have more complex care needs, making strong oversight and high-quality staffing even more critical. Research also shows that individuals with serious mental illness are more likely to be admitted to nursing homes with more deficiencies in care, putting them at heightened risk when oversight systems fail.

State officials have made progress in reducing inspection backlogs and improving regulatory performance. However, this follows years of systemic breakdowns that eroded public trust. SB 240 represents an important step toward rebuilding that trust. The Advisory Council will include frontline workers, nursing home residents, industry representatives, and advocacy groups, bringing a wide range of experience to the table. By regularly engaging with these stakeholders, OHCQ will gain a deeper understanding of the real-world challenges faced by providers, residents, patients, and families, ultimately supporting more informed decision-making and stronger outcomes.

In addition, the Advisory Council will be responsible for reviewing OHCQ data reports, compiling feedback from members, and developing recommendations to improve the quality of nursing home and hospital care. This data-driven approach will enable the Council to identify areas of concern early and offer recommendations for improvement before problems escalate.

The Advisory Council will help ensure that Maryland's oversight system is responsive, collaborative, and grounded in the lived experience of those most affected by lapses in quality and safety. Most importantly, the Advisory Council will help protect residents in long-term care who are least able to safeguard themselves and most dependent on the State to fulfill its oversight responsibilities. For these reasons, MSCAN urges a favorable report on SB 240.

¹ *Complaint: Maryland Department of Health—Office of Health Care Quality oversight failures.* <https://justiceinaging.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/1-MD-Complaint.pdf>

² Bucy, T., Moeller, K., Skarphol, T., Shippee, N., Bowblis, J. R., Winkelman, T., & Shippee, T. (2022). Serious mental illness in nursing homes: Stakeholder perspectives on the federal Preadmission Screening Program. *Journal of Aging & Social Policy*, 34(5), 769–787. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08959420.2022.2083882>