



Wes Moore | Governor

Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor

Carmel Roques | Secretary

Date: February 26, 2026

Bill Number: HB 637

Bill Title: Public Health - Recommendations for Immunizations, Screenings, and Preventive Services - Pharmacist Administration and Required Health Insurance Coverage (The Vax Act)

Committee: House Health Committee

MDOA Position: Favorable

Madam Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Department of Aging (MDOA) respectfully submits this written testimony in strong support of House Bill 637.

Maryland is experiencing a significant demographic shift. Today, nearly one in four Marylanders is age 60 or older, and that number continues to grow. By 2030, adults age 60 and older are projected to outnumber children under 18 in our state. This longevity dividend represents tremendous opportunity, but it also requires thoughtful public policy to ensure that Marylanders can age with health, independence, and dignity.

In alignment with the State's multisector plan for aging, **Longevity Ready Maryland**, we are working to position Maryland as a place where individuals can live longer and live better. A core pillar of this plan is advancing health equity and expanding access to preventive health services that help older adults remain healthy, engaged, and independent in their communities.

HB 637 supports this vision. Preventive health services, including immunizations, screenings, and other evidence-based preventive care, are among the most effective tools we have to improve health outcomes and reduce avoidable healthcare costs. Immunizations protect older adults from serious illnesses such as influenza, pneumonia, shingles, and COVID-19, all of which can have more severe consequences with advancing age. Routine screenings for cancer, cardiovascular



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disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, and cognitive changes allow for early detection and treatment, significantly improving outcomes and quality of life.

The benefits are well-documented:

- **Improved health and longevity:** Preventive services reduce hospitalizations, complications, and premature mortality among older adults.
- **Preservation of independence:** By preventing or detecting conditions early, older adults are more likely to remain safely in their homes and communities.
- **Reduced caregiver strain:** Healthier older adults require fewer intensive supports, reducing stress on family caregivers.
- **Lower long-term costs:** Preventing illness is more cost-effective than treating advanced disease, benefiting individuals, families, and the State's healthcare system.

Importantly, expanding access to preventive services also advances health equity. Older adults in underserved and rural communities, communities of color, and individuals with limited incomes often face barriers to accessing preventive care. Policies that reduce these barriers ensure that all Marylanders, regardless of zip code or income, can benefit from modern preventive medicine.

As we implement the goals of Longevity Ready Maryland, strengthening access to immunizations, screenings, and preventive services is essential to creating age-friendly, health-promoting communities across our State. HB 637 is consistent with this strategic vision and represents a practical, forward-looking investment in Maryland's aging population.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Aging respectfully urges a favorable report on House Bill 637.