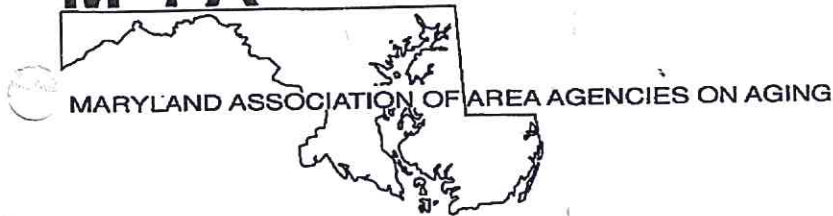


M4A



Catherine R. Willis, LMSW
President

Representing Queen Anne's County
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Gary Gunther, Treasurer
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Talbot, Caroline & Kent Counties

Pamela Jordan, Secretary
Representing Anne Arundel County
Department of Aging and Disabilities

Senate Finance Committee March 5, 2020

Legislation: SB 966 Health Facilities – Assisted Living Programs – Referrals and Licenses
Sponsor: Senator Hettlemean
Position: Support

The nineteen member organizations of Maryland Association of Area Agencies on Aging (M4A) serve Maryland's older and disabled citizens, providing a range of cost-effective state, federal and locally funded programs that help individuals remain secure in the community with dignity, independence, and choice as they age. M4A and its associated Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) represent the "front line" in Maryland's challenge to meet the complex and varied needs of well over 1 million older adults statewide. M4A's goal is to ensure coordination and communication with all partners on all aspects of senior service planning to enhance opportunity and availability to all eligible citizens.

AAAs are guided by the federal Older Americans Act "to provide services with preference given to older individuals with the greatest economic and social need with particular attention to low-income minority individuals with limited English proficiency and older adults residing in rural areas."

We are concerned about the potential for elder abuse to occur in unlicensed and unsafe care facilities, which can be found throughout the state. Adults in assisted living facilities deserve quality care, but instead, they are often caught in a system where they are taken advantage of and experience abuse. Assisted living referrers and unlicensed providers make decisions regarding the care of vulnerable adults without their consent – these abusive actions isolate vulnerable adults, take away their control of their own finances and medical care, and deny them their rights to dignity and safe living conditions.

We support SB 966 because requiring the "assisted living referrer" to register with the state will help us hold these referrers accountable and decrease the risk of vulnerable adults being referred to unlicensed facilities where they may be unsafe or subject to abuse.

For these reasons, the M4A supports SB 966 and urges a favorable report on the bill.