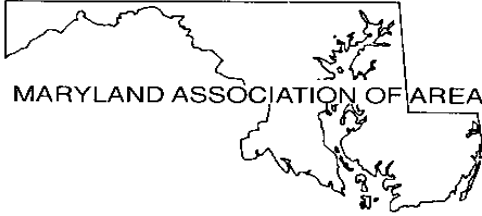


M 4 A



*Catherine R. Willis, LMSW
President*

*Representing Queen Anne's County
Department of Community Services*

*Odile Brunetto, Ed.D., Vice President
Representing Montgomery County
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*Gary Gunther, Treasurer
Representing Upper Shore Aging, Inc.,
Talbot, Caroline & Kent Counties*

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

Senate Finance Committee February 19, 2020

Legislation: SB 670 Department of Aging – Assisted Living Program Subsidies - Determination

Sponsor: Sen. Zucker, et al

Position: Support

The nineteen member organizations of 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 (AAA's) represent the "front line" in Maryland's challenge to meet the complex and varied needs of well over 1 million older adults statewide.

M4A respectfully supports Senate Bill 670. MDoA's budget has remained relatively flat for well over a decade even though the population is surging. Waiting lists for state-only programs such as Senior Assisted Living Group Home programs, that keep elderly frail seniors most at-risk of institutionalization, continue to grow as the population grows. This cost-effective program works to keep frail seniors safely in an assisted living facility rather than a much costlier nursing home facility. They promote independence, reduce social isolation, and institutionalization. By providing an increased subsidy amount of \$1,000 as well as the average percentage growth in the Consumer Price Index this will better serve the current population of residents who cannot afford the monthly cost of Assisted Living Group Homes which is currently only offering a subsidy up to \$650 per month.

It is M4A's goal to ensure coordination and communication with all partners on all aspects of senior service planning to enhance opportunity and availability to all eligible citizens. M4A urges the Committee to support SB 670 to further this goal.