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**SB 313 Maryland Department of Health – Public Health Outreach Programs  
– Cognitive Impairment, Alzheimer’s Disease, and Other Types of Dementia  
SUPPORT  
Education, Health, and Environmental Matters Committee  
January 26, 2021**

Good Afternoon Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee. I am Karen Kalla, Executive Council Member and lead advocacy volunteer for AARP MD. AARP Maryland is one of the largest membership-based organizations in the state, encompassing almost 850,000 members. **AARP MD overwhelmingly supports SB313 Maryland Department of Health – Public Health Outreach Programs – Cognitive Impairment, Alzheimer’s Disease, and Other Types of Dementia.**

AARP is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, nationwide organization that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities, and protection from financial abuse.

SB313 requires the Maryland Department of Health along with a variety of departments and entities to incorporate information regarding certain types of cognitive impairment into relevant outreach programs administered by the Department to educate health care providers and increase understanding of certain types of cognitive impairment. It focuses on the risk of cognitive decline, particularly among individuals in Black and Latino communities who are at greater risk.

About 25% of older adults have cognitive, mental, or substance use disorders including dementia, serious and persistent mental illnesses, severe anxiety, depression, and other disorders resulting in isolation, dysfunction, behavioral obstacles to living in the community, and high rates of suicide. Older veterans are at higher risk for dementia, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse disorder, and suicide; significant racial and ethnic disparities exist.

Most of older adults with behavioral health conditions do not receive treatment due to service shortages; unaffordable cost; limited access including hard-to-reach locations,

Real Possibilities

limited services in home and community settings, inability to use tele-health services, and lack of linguistic and cultural competence; and stigma, ageism, and racism.

SB 313 will educate health providers and improve understanding of early warning signs of and how to reduce the risk of cognitive decline, Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia. To address the lack of access for so many, it will advance and support Medicare annual wellness visits and other annual physical visits to assess cognitive health for individuals 65 years and older.

For these reasons, AARP supports SB313. For questions, please contact Tammy Bresnahan [tbresnahan@aarp.org](mailto:tbresnahan@aarp.org) or by calling 410-302-8451.