



# Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network

## MSCAN

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*Alzheimer's  
Association,  
Maryland Chapters*

*Baltimore Jewish  
Council*

*Catholic Charities*

*Central Maryland  
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Center*

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Carol Lienhard  
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## **Testimony in Support of HB 564 - Department of Aging - Assisted Living Program Subsidies - Determinations**

### **House Appropriations Committee February 25, 2020**

Good afternoon, my name is Eric Colchamiro, and I am the Director of Government Affairs for the Alzheimer's Association. I am here today on behalf of the Association and as a member of the Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network (MSCAN), a statewide coalition that supports policies that meet the housing and care needs of Maryland's low and moderate-income seniors.

MSCAN enthusiastically supports SB 670 for its potential to positively impact the lives of low-income seniors who deserve quality, licensed assisted living facilities. The bill would increase the Senior Assisted Living Group Home Subsidy for the first time in almost 20 years. The bill mandates an increase to \$1,000 from \$650 while also tying the subsidy to the consumer price index, ensuring that it will increase overtime as inflation occurs.

To be eligible for the subsidy, the older adult's net monthly income may not be higher than 60 percent of the State median income and assets may be no greater than \$11,000 if single or \$14,000 if a couple. The subsidy may cover the difference between the net monthly income of the resident after a \$60/month personal allowance deduction, and the approved monthly assisted living fee. Further, for the assisted living facility to be eligible, it must be licensed with the state and have between 4 and 16 beds in its facility.

MSCAN strongly urges an increase in the subsidy amount for this cost-effective program which is vital in meeting the needs of Maryland's dramatically growing senior population. The subsidies are paid from State funds on behalf of eligible residents who are unable to afford the cost of assisted living and might otherwise be in nursing facilities. During the middle stages of Alzheimer's, it becomes necessary to provide 24-hour supervision to keep the person with dementia safe. As the disease progresses into the late-stages, round-the-clock care requirements become more intensive.

The subsidy supports the cost of services provided in assisted living; In 2018, this subsidy helped almost 400 seniors afford licensed assisted living facilities. This likely kept them out of nursing facilities, which costs almost \$90,000 dollars a year, or 13 million dollars for 150 seniors.

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB564. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.