



Senate Finance Committee

March 6, 2020

SB 796: Developmental Disabilities Administration – Program Changes and Required Reports

Position: Support

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council's (Council) mission is to advance the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all facets of community life by eliminating barriers, creating opportunities, empowering people, and promoting innovation. ***The majority of our Council members are people with developmental disabilities and parents or family members of people with developmental disabilities.*** Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) protects the legal and human rights of people with developmental disabilities.

The Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) is moving forward with major systems change that will have an impact on all aspects of people's lives because of their impact on how people receive services and supports to achieve their personal goals. These include changes to service definitions, funding, person centered planning, billing and payment, and regulations. While the Council and DRM support the DDA's goal to create a flexible, person-centered, family-oriented system of supports for people with developmental disabilities, the ambitious timeline for the systems transformation has generated concerns.

- About 25,000 Marylanders with developmental disabilities rely on supports and services funded by the DDA to live, work, and thrive in their communities.
- Ongoing systems transformation includes changes to service definitions, the person-centered planning process, and the migration of the DDA's funding system, including a change to rates and the use of the Long Term Services and Supports software system. As a result of so many changes at once, some people with developmental disabilities who rely on services and supports from the DDA have experienced delays and/or cuts in their services. Some people have lost technical or financial eligibility for Medical Assistance through no fault of their own, which jeopardizes their critical services and supports.
- **Any major systems change requires adequate transition and capacity so that no one is harmed.**

To make sure people with developmental disabilities are not adversely impacted, SB 796:

- Delays implementation of the new service definitions and LTSS to July 1, 2021.
- Ensures that people who take action within the appeal period to appeal a loss of Medicaid eligibility, maintain their services during the appeal process.
- Requires a number of reports from DDA to the General Assembly to ensure that the system, rates, communication, back up plans, and training are all in place in order to facilitate a smooth transition in which neither people with developmental disabilities nor providers are hurt.

Stakeholders have identified multiple issues related to the proposed new rate system, new payment system, and new service definitions. Additionally, the DDA has engaged in a small pilot to test the new system (LTSS) for all of the administrative, planning, and financial functions, and the pilot has raised numerous concerns that must be addressed in order for a smooth system transition to occur. In recognition of the impact of these changes and concerns, the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Health is meeting with stakeholders. This is a critical step; however, this legislation will further ensure all issues can be addressed.

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