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Budget and Taxation Committee
Chair, Capital Budget Subcommittee

Chair, Senate Democratic Caucus

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Senator Craig J. Zucker
Senate Bill 636/ House Bill 1403- Maryland Department of Health - Waiver Programs
- Waitlist Reduction (End the Wait Act)
House Health and Government Operations Committee
March 29th, 2022
1:30pm
Position: SUPPORT

Good afternoon Chairman Pendergrass, Vice Chairman Pena-Melnyk, and distinguished members of the committee. It is my pleasure to testify today in **support of Senate Bill - 636 - Maryland Department of Health - Waiver Programs - Waitlist Reduction (End the Wait Act)**.

Senate Bill 636 requires the Maryland Department of Health to develop plans to reduce the waitlist or registry for eight specified waiver programs by 50%. The plan must include measures to recruit and retain providers, any changes in reimbursement rates for services under the waiver programs, reduce the timeframe for the waitlist for each waiver program by 50%, and the projected cost of the measures be implemented under the plan. This legislation also requires the Governor to include sufficient funds to carry out the plan in the annual budget.

The eight waivers that must be included in the plan are:

1. The Community Pathways Waiver
2. The Community Supports Waiver
3. The Family Supports Waiver
4. The Brain Injury Waiver
5. The Home and Community Based Options Waiver
6. The Medical Day Care Services
7. The Model Waiver for Medically Fragile Children
8. The Autism Waiver

This legislation is critical to ensuring people with disabilities get the services we already have in place in a timely manner. Over 18,000 people in Maryland with disabilities rely

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on services through the Medicaid waivers. There are long waits from the date an individual gets on a waiting list for waiver services to the time they get service.

On The Maryland Department of Health's Brain Injury Waiver and the Medical Day Care Services Waiver, there are no current waitlists, and The Model Waiver for Medically Fragile Children is currently full with a waitlist of 161 individuals.

The Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) administers three Medicaid waivers that would be addressed by this bill: The Community Pathways Waiver; Community Supports Waiver; and Family Supports Waiver. The waitlist for these three waivers that assist with support services for children and their families is approximately 3,600 individuals.

The average wait for a person to get on the autism waiver is about 10 years, this leads to people aging out of the waitlist, which in turn leaves the person not receiving the services they deserve. These waiver programs provide people with disabilities the support they need. Currently, there are over 6,000 children on the autism waiver registry. Unfortunately, due to lengthy waitlist times many children end up aging out before any services are provided.

The waitlist with the most individuals is the Medicaid Home- and Community-based Services Waiver, which currently has 21,238 individuals on the waiver registry. This service supports older adults and people with disabilities community services to live in their own homes. This service includes assisted living, medical day care, family training, and more. We have these resources available and now is the time to make sure Marylander's get access to these programs that can make a huge difference in their everyday life.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 636. Thank you for your kind consideration.

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