



**HB318: Maryland Medical Assistance Program- Provider Agencies and Personal Care Aides –
Reimbursement and Wages
Support**

Testimony of Maryland Centers for Independent Living

House Health and Government Operations hearing February 14, 2023

The seven Centers for Independent Living (CIL) were established by federal law and work to ensure the civil rights and quality services of people with disabilities in Maryland. Centers for Independent Living are nonprofit disability resource and advocacy organizations located throughout Maryland operated by and for people with disabilities. CIL staff and Boards are at least 51% people with disabilities. We are part of a nationwide network which provides Information and Referral, Advocacy, Peer Support, Independent Living Skills training, and Transition Services.

Demand for home care is increasing as Marylanders age and more Marylanders with disabilities receive care in their homes rather than in nursing facilities. There is already a shortage of personal care aides as workers take jobs in other sectors for better pay and benefits. Medicaid funds most home care and the Maryland Department of Health currently pays Residential Service Agencies (RSAs, or home care agencies) \$23 per hour of care.

HB318 has two main parts. *First*, it increases the Medicaid reimbursement rate to \$25/hour. *Second*, it provides that starting July 1, 2024, personal care aides whose work is funded through the Maryland Department of Health’s Office of Long Term Services and Supports must be paid at least \$16 per hour.

In summary, this bill will increase funding for certain Medicaid-funded home care programs while also ensuring that home care workers get a fairer share of that money – improving job quality, recruitment and retention. Many people with disabilities across the state rely on personal care aides to help maintain their independence at home. The Maryland Centers for Independent Living stand in support of this bill.

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