



**DATE:** March 14, 2023                      **COMMITTEE:** House Health and Government Operations  
**BILL NO:** House Bill 1157  
**BILL TITLE:** MD Medical Assistance Program - Employed Persons with Disabilities Program – Eligibility  
**POSITION:** Support

**Kennedy Krieger Institute supports House Bill 1157 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Employed Persons with Disabilities Program – Eligibility.**

**Bill Summary:**

House Bill 1157 prohibits the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) from limiting eligibility to receive services under the Employed Persons with Disabilities Program based on the earned or unearned income of the applicant or the applicant’s spouse. Additionally, it requires MDH to apply to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid services for any amendments to the state plan, waivers, or other federal approvals necessary to implement the requirements of this legislation.

**Background:**

Kennedy Krieger's Neurodiversity at Work program takes a multi-faceted approach to hiring and retaining individuals of all abilities as part of the workforce. Neurodiversity at Work is a collective impact initiative designed to create and support gainful employment for individuals with disabilities, providing economic benefit for businesses and the larger community. The Neurodiversity at Work program fosters integrated workplace settings where all individuals can experience success and independence. Currently the program includes several specialty initiatives Project SEARCH, CORE Foundations a Developmental Disabilities Administration Licensed Agency, HR pathways hiring program, training and education services, legislative efforts, research, transition consultation services, and planning for a national conference and on-going events.

Kennedy Krieger Institute is an inclusive employer that believes that individuals with disabilities have the skills, talents, and drive to contribute significantly to the workforce and to the broader community. A neurodiverse workforce benefits all.

**Rationale:**

Individuals with disabilities, including those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, want to be, and increasingly, are productive members of the workforce. As a provider of employment services, we choose hiring practices that support growth and retention based on an individual’s qualifications. This bill would support improving employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities, while ensuring their eligibility that supports that person in obtaining and maintaining employment. Individuals with disabilities that have access to funding to support that person in obtaining meaningful employment, will continue to require that support long after their initial onboarding. Maintaining supports in place set-up our community up for successful employment opportunities for both the business community and employees. However, this legislation will support statewide efforts for more disability awareness, more inclusive hiring practices, and increase employment for individuals with disabilities without fear of loss of benefits.

**Kennedy Krieger Institute requests a favorable report on House Bill 1157.**