



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550

ANNAPOLIS: 240-777-8270

SB 622

DATE: March 28, 2023

SPONSOR: Senator Zucker, et al.

ASSIGNED TO: Health and Government Operations

CONTACT PERSON: Leslie Frey (leslie.frey@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: FAVORABLE- Department of Health and Human Services

Medicaid Waiver Programs – Waitlist and Registry Reduction (End the Wait Act)

Beginning in fiscal year 2024, Senate Bill 622 permits funding in the annual budget for the Community Pathways Waiver, the Community Supports Waiver, the Family Supports Waiver, the Brain Injury Waiver, the Home- and Community-Based Options Waiver, the Medical Day Care Services Waiver, and the Model Waiver for Medically Fragile Children programs to be allocated for the purpose of hiring and retaining providers. The bill amends Supplemental Budget Number 5 of 2022 to reflect that the fiscal year 2023 budget for these waiver programs may also be used for the purpose of providing community services to individuals waiting for services through the enumerated waivers and expanding provider capacity, including hiring and retaining staff and providers, increasing provider rates, and addressing other issues that limit provider capacity.

Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (MCDHHS) supports increasing the number of individuals in the State served by Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS). Maryland maintains one of the largest waiting lists for HCBS in the country¹, and MCDHHS wholeheartedly supports the legislative efforts in recent years to increase the number of Marylanders served by the waivers covered by Senate Bill 622. We respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 622 because it includes language granting the Maryland Department of Health the ability to use funding to address issues that limit provider capacity.

There are three areas of service delivery undertaken by MCDHHS that will be directly affected by the increased enrollment in the waiver services: MCDHHS is the Service Coordination provider for the Autism Waiver program for Montgomery County; it employs Adult Evaluation and Review Services (AERS) nurses who complete the initial, annual and significant change assessments for all Montgomery County participants in the HCBS Options Waiver; and it is home to the County's Local Health Department Nurse Monitoring Program which oversees the monthly nurse monitoring for all HCBS program participants in Montgomery County (except for HCBS Options waiver clients who are in assisted living). Because these roles are ancillary to, but necessary for, the direct services provided to waiver participants, it is critical that capacity for services such as these be expanded through funding under Senate Bill 622 so that waiver participants are able to access their necessary services in a timely manner.

¹ <https://files.kff.org/attachment/Issue-Brief-Key-State-Policy-Choices-About-Medicaid-Home-and-Community-Based-Services>