

Written testimony MDOA - DOD Attendant Care update

Uploaded by: Carmel Roques

Position: FAV



Wes Moore | Governor

Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor

Carmel Roques | Secretary

Date: February 7, 2024

Bill Number: **SB 226**

Bill Title: Human Services - Attendant Care Program - Ongoing Additional Supports

Committee: Senate Finance

MDOA Position: FAVORABLE

The Department of Aging (MDOA) submits this testimony in support of Senate Bill (SB) 226 - Human Services - Attendant Care Program - Ongoing Additional Supports.

The Maryland Department of Aging (MDOA) serves as Maryland's State Unit of Aging, administering federal funding for core programs, overseeing the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) network at the local level that provides services, and planning for Maryland's older adult population. Pursuant to a recent Executive Order, in January 2024, MDOA launched the Longevity-Ready Maryland Initiative,¹ which will build upon existing efforts across state agencies, private and philanthropic sectors and other stakeholders to tackle real-life challenges throughout the lifespan, taking a whole-of-life and whole-of-government approach. Key goals of Longevity-Ready Maryland are: for all Marylanders to afford and enjoy their longer lives with increased access to healthcare and retirement needs; and promote opportunities for all, regardless of age or ability; and optimizing health, wellness and mobility, delaying dependency.

SB226, which would modernize and add needed flexibility to the Department of Disabilities' attendant care program, squarely furthers these goals. The program serves adults up to age 64, assisting individual participants with severe chronic or permanent physical disabilities who need attendant care services to direct their own care at home, school, work, or other community locations. Long overdue for an update and higher utilization, SB 226 would keep remaining services covered and expand to allow reimbursement for commonly available services like: grocery and prescription delivery, laundry and ride-sharing services, and potentially other

¹ More on Longevity-Ready MD Initiative available at: <https://aging.maryland.gov/Pages/LRM.aspx>



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app-based and online services that may suit participants' needs and fit the goals of the program. These improvements will support more Marylanders in living, working, and attending school with higher degrees of independence in their communities. Programs and related efforts like this are absolutely part of our journey to becoming longevity-ready.

MDOA thanks the Department of Disabilities for their leadership and respectfully urges a favorable report for SB226. If you have any questions, please contact Andrea Nunez, Legislative Director, at andrea.nunez@maryland.gov or (443) 414-8183.

Sincerely,

Carmel Roques
Secretary
Maryland Department of Aging

SB 226 Attendant Care Program.pdf

Uploaded by: Cody Drinkwater

Position: FAV



People On the Go of Maryland

SB 226

Department of Human Services

Attendant Care Program - Ongoing Additional Supports

Altering the purpose of the Attendant Care Program to include the provision of financial assistance for ongoing additional supports, that increase an eligible individual's independent performance of essential daily living activities, and is requested by an eligible individual.

Position: Support

February 7, 2024

Sponsored by the Finance Committee Chair

At the Request of

The Maryland Department of Disabilities

Written by Mat Rice

People On the Go of Maryland

Honorable Chairperson, and distinguished members of the Senate Finance Committee:

People On the Go of Maryland (POG) is a statewide self-advocacy organization, ran for and by those with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD) and our mission is to promote self-advocacy throughout the state.

People On the Go is pleased to provide this written testimony in support of Senate Bill 226 (SB 226). We support this bill because:

- SB 226 would alter the purpose of the attendant care program, overseen by the Maryland Department of Disabilities, to increase the eligible expenses for which an individual with a physical disability is able to request reimbursement.
- At POG, we believe that all people, regardless of disability, have the right to live, work, love, and play in the communities of our choosing. We see this legislation as expanding these opportunities to more people with disabilities.
- Moreover, people with disabilities face greater difficulties in accessing resources in our communities. Being reimbursed for services like laundry and grocery delivery, would greatly facilitate our ability to live independent lives.
- People with disabilities also face a disproportionately high rate of poverty, due to being forced to rely on means-tested programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, and other services. This may prevent an individual from being able to pay, on their own, for ordinary day-to-day expenses.
- POG foresees that a successful implementation of this attendant care program would serve as a model for other statewide programs in the future, that are intended to provide assistance to disabled and other marginalized populations in Maryland.

For these reasons, People On the Go advises a favorable report for SB 226.
Thank you for your consideration.

Should you have any questions. Please contact Mat Rice.

Thank you,

Mat Rice, Executive Director

M: 410-925-5706

E: mat@pogmd.org

SB226 Written Testimony ACP.docx (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Lisa Belcastro

Position: FAV



DATE: February 8, 2024
BILL: SB 226: Human Services - Attendant Care Program - Ongoing Additional Supports
COMMITTEE: Finance
POSITION: Support

Dear Chair Beidle,

The Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) is pleased to submit this letter of support for our Departmental, SB 226 Human Services - Attendant Care Program - Ongoing Additional Supports.

Under Senate Bill 226, Ongoing Additional Supports would be added as a reimbursable expense to the Attendant Care Program.

The Attendant Care Program was established in 1982 with the goal of assisting individuals with permanent physical disabilities who are living in the community maintain employment, attend an institution of post-secondary education, or prevent placement in a nursing facility.

The world has changed drastically since the program's inception. Through the use of modern-day advancements and technology, there are steps that can be taken to revitalize the program, make it more accessible, and give participants more power in directing their services.

Statute dictates the goals of the program be met by providing direct reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for attendant care services. These are services provided by an individual who is hired to assist with activities of daily living such as personal hygiene, house work, food preparation, and mobility at home or in the community.

This bill would add flexibilities to the program by including Ongoing Additional Supports as reimbursable expenses in addition to Attendant Care Services. Ongoing Additional Supports are continual supports that increase an individual's independent performance of an essential activity of daily living, self-care, or mobility. Through the use of modern-day advancements and technology, participants could have access to grocery delivery services, laundry services, prescription delivery, ride-share services, assistance with service animal expenses, and more.

The added flexibilities of Ongoing Additional Supports also make the Attendant Care Program more equitable and accessible to Marylanders with disabilities. Attendant care or personal care services are expensive and cost-prohibitive to many. Being a reimbursement model, individuals must cover the upfront expenses of this type of care – putting the program out of reach for many. By allowing a menu of support options at varying price points, we lower the barrier of entry, and allow more individuals to access the program

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter of support. If you have any questions please contact Lisa Belcastro, Deputy Secretary, Lisa.Belcastro@maryland.gov, (443) 941-5094.

Sincerely,

Carol A. Beatty, Secretary

SB 226 Attendant Care Program.pdf

Uploaded by: Mat Rice

Position: FAV



People On the Go of Maryland

SB 226

Department of Human Services

Attendant Care Program - Ongoing Additional Supports

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- At POG, we believe that all people, regardless of disability, have the right to live, work, love, and play in the communities of our choosing. We see this legislation as expanding these opportunities to more people with disabilities.
- Moreover, people with disabilities face greater difficulties in accessing resources in our communities. Being reimbursed for services like laundry and grocery delivery, would greatly facilitate our ability to live independent lives.
- People with disabilities also face a disproportionately high rate of poverty, due to being forced to rely on means-tested programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, and other services. This may prevent an individual from being able to pay, on their own, for ordinary day-to-day expenses.
- POG foresees that a successful implementation of this attendant care program would serve as a model for other statewide programs in the future, that are intended to provide assistance to disabled and other marginalized populations in Maryland.

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Thank you,

Mat Rice, Executive Director

M: 410-925-5706

E: mat@pogmd.org

SB226.DD Council.Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel London

Position: FAV



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

Senate Finance Committee

SB 226: Human Services – Attendant Care Program – Ongoing Additional Supports

February 8, 2024

Position: Support

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council) creates changes to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need. The Attendant Care Program makes it possible for people with disabilities to do just that.

WHAT is the Attendant Care Program?

- The Program, operated by the Maryland Department of Disabilities, provides financial assistance to eligible people for attendant care services so people can work, go to college, and be more independent.
- Attendant care services help people do daily activities like dressing, cooking, eating, and bathing. They are provided by another person, and can be provided at home, school, work, or other places in the community.

WHAT does this legislation do?

- Adds “ongoing additional supports” to the Attendant Care Program so people with disabilities can get financial assistance for additional support that increases their independence.
- An eligible person with a disability has to ask for the ongoing additional supports and the Department has to approve the request.

WHY is this important?

- **Adding ongoing additional supports modernizes the Program.** The world has changed since the Program started over 40 years ago. More people with disabilities are using technology, delivery services, and service animals to increase their independence instead of relying on other people.
- **Increased flexibility leads to increased independence.** The added flexibility of allowing ongoing additional supports to be paid for by the Program helps more people with disabilities live the lives they want with the support they need.
- **Expenses related to a disability can be much higher relative to other things.** The Program reimburses people. That means people with disabilities have to cover the upfront costs – something most people cannot do. **Expanding the options available to people by adding ongoing additional supports allows people to choose different support that can be much cheaper than attendant care services and therefore decreases this barrier.**

Adding ongoing additional supports as a reimbursable expense recognizes modern day society and all the new advancements that people, including people with disabilities, can take advantage of. It makes the Program more accessible and equitable, and allows people to be more independent. For these reasons, the Council supports SB226.

Contact: Rachel London, Executive Director, RLondon@md-council.org

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Dee Sapp, *Chairperson* • Rachel London, Esq., *Executive Director*

SB226 - FAV - DHS.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel Sledge Government Affairs

Position: FAV

February 8, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 20401

**RE: TESTIMONY ON SB 226 - Human Services - Attendant Care Program - Ongoing
Additional Supports - POSITION: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Finance Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide written testimony in favor of Senate Bill 226 (SB 226).

With offices in every one of Maryland's jurisdictions, we empower Marylanders to reach their full potential by providing preventative and supportive services, economic assistance, and meaningful connections to workforce development and career opportunities. The Social Services Administration within DHS implements the Adult Services programs which are impacted by SB 226.

SB 226 expands the Attendant Care Program administered by the Maryland Department of Disabilities. The Attendant Care Program provides assistance to adults with disabilities to maintain their independence. The program provides financial reimbursement to assist individuals with severe chronic or permanent physical disabilities who require attendant care services to direct their own care and select their own service providers. The bill would positively impact adult clients served by Adult Services programs. Providing supportive services that allow adults to remain in their community is a goal of the Adult Services program. Previously, persons with disabilities living independently were unable to submit reimbursement for delivery fees for groceries, costs of laundry services, and expenses associated with service animals. Expanding the Attendant Care Program will aid persons with disabilities to continue living independently.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide favorable testimony to the Committee for consideration during your deliberations. We look forward to the decision of the Committee and welcome continued collaboration on SB 226.

If you require additional information, please contact Rachel Sledge, Director of Government Affairs, at rachel.sledge@maryland.gov.

In service,



Rafael López
Secretary

