



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.

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