

DRM HB822 Written Testimony_AS 3.26.24.pdf

Uploaded by: Audrey Sellers

Position: FAV



Empowerment. Integration. Equality.

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HOUSE BILL 822: MARYLAND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM – EMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

**Senate Finance Committee
March 26, 2024**

Position: Support

Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) is the protection and advocacy organization for the state of Maryland; the mission of the organization, part of a national network of similar agencies, is to advocate for the legal rights of people with disabilities throughout the state. One of the mandated purposes of DRM's legal work is to ensure that people with disabilities are included in their communities and that they have access to the supports and services that makes community participation possible. House Bill 822 would further this goal by requiring that the Maryland Department of Health provide Maryland Medical Assistance Program services for significantly disabled individuals under the Employed Individuals with Disabilities (EID) Program in accordance with requirements improving programmatic accessibility.

Most notably, HB 822 would eliminate the income, age and asset limit for EID recipients and their spouses. Asset limits and income limits often trap beneficiaries of public assistance programs in poverty and prevent them from obtaining economic self-sufficiency because of their need to maintain their finances under a certain ceiling to qualify for benefits. Additionally, asset and income caps create a barrier that prevents individuals with disabilities who receive EID assistance from community inclusion. These limitations prevent beneficiaries from building up sufficient savings to participate in life milestones such as purchasing a home.

HB 822 would also make the application process more accessible to individuals with disabilities, removing confusing administrative barriers that may otherwise prevent individuals from applying for much-needed benefits in the first place. HB 822 provides clear guidelines for eligibility and requires information to be provided to applicants in plain language.

Individuals with disabilities should not have to sacrifice their potential to earn a living wage and build assets in order to receive their healthcare benefits. For these reasons and more, DRM supports HB 822.

For more information or questions about our position, please contact Audrey Sellers at AudreyS@DisabilityRightsMD.org or 410-787-6993. We thank you for your consideration of House Bill 822, a bill with the power to transform the lives of working Marylanders with significant disabilities.

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Uploaded by: Jason Caplan

Position: FAV



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

March 26, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

Re: HB 822 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Employed Individuals With Disabilities – Letter of Support as Amended

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) respectfully submits this letter of support as amended for House Bill (HB) 822 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Employed Individuals with Disabilities. The amended bill would translate into statute changes that have been implemented in the program since January 1, 2024.

In collaboration with stakeholders, the Department has made significant changes to the EID program, many of which are codified by portions of this bill. These changes greatly expand the individuals who can now qualify for the program. They also eliminate previous barriers that may have prevented individuals from getting married, by eliminating spousal income and asset tests for eligibility purposes. Specifically, effective January 1, 2024, the Department enacted changes to the EID Program (1) lowering the eligibility age from 18 to 16, (2) eliminating the income requirement and disregarding all retirement accounts for participants, (3) creating the flexibility of an Independence Account for participants, (4) disregarding spousal income and assets as part of applicant eligibility, and (5) setting new premium levels for higher-income recipients. The Department appreciates all of the work with the sponsor and is supportive of promulgating these recent expansions into statute and the amendments that were adopted will ensure that the statute matches the work we have done and will conform with federal statutory requirements.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov or (410) 260-3190.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary

Maryland Catholic Conference_FAV_HB822 SENATE CROS

Uploaded by: Jenny Kraska

Position: FAV



**MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE**

March 26, 2024

HB 822

Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Employed Individuals With Disabilities

Senate Finance Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) offers this testimony in support of House Bill 822. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 822 would require the Maryland department of Health to provide Maryland Medical Assistance Program services to qualified applicants who are at least 16 years old and to existing Program recipients under the Employed Individuals with Disabilities Program. This legislation is an important step towards ensuring individuals with disabilities have access to healthcare services they need.

The principle of solidarity calls us to stand in unity with our brothers and sisters who are most vulnerable and marginalized in society. Individuals with disabilities often face significant barriers to accessing healthcare services, which can have profound implications for their physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. By expanding access to the Maryland Medical Assistance Program for qualified applicants and existing Program recipients under the Employed Individuals with Disabilities Program, we affirm their intrinsic worth and recognize their right to receive the care and support they need to flourish.

Our Catholic tradition emphasizes the importance of promoting the common good and ensuring that all members of society have the opportunity to participate fully and contribute their gifts and talents. Access to healthcare is a fundamental human right that is essential for individuals to live with dignity and fulfill their God-given potential. By providing Maryland Medical Assistance Program services to individuals with disabilities, we uphold their dignity and affirm their inherent value.

The MCC appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 822.

HB822.DD Coalition.Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel London

Position: FAV



MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COALITION

Dedicated to the rights and quality of life for people with developmental disabilities in Maryland

Senate Finance Committee

HB 822: Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Employed Individuals with Disabilities

March 26, 2024

Position: Support



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Maryland Developmental
Disabilities Council

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The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Coalition (DD Coalition) is comprised of five statewide organizations that are committed to improving the opportunities and outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families. HB 822 would do just that. The Employed Individuals with Disabilities (EID) Program extends Medical Assistance health benefits to Marylanders that work. **HB 822 is an important step to ensure more people with disabilities can work and receive the support they need to do so.**

WHAT does this bill do?

- Eliminates the income limit for EID recipients.
- Makes the application process easier.
- Provides clear guidelines for eligibility and requires the use of plain language.
- Requires the Department to get feedback from stakeholders, and report to the General Assembly about the impact of expanding eligibility to people age 65 and older.

WHY is this legislation important?

- **Removes barriers to competitive employment.** People with disabilities want real jobs with real wages, but face various barriers, including the lack of services and support to help them. Medicaid is an important source of coverage for services that support the ability of people with disabilities to work, such as personal assistance services, prescription drugs, and assistive technology.
- **Helps people with disabilities maintain access to these critical services.** The EID Program provides medically necessary services and supports to ensure people with disabilities can work. When the Program was created, perhaps many people retired at 65, but that is not true anymore. **Requiring the Department to report on the impact of increase the age limit is an important step. Many people work beyond age 65 and those that want to should continue to receive the services and supports they need to continue to be productive, active employees.**
- **Promotes real jobs with real wages.** By removing income and some asset limits, people can keep their services while also advancing their careers, getting pay raises, and saving for retirement.

It is critical that people with disabilities have full access to the services and supports they need and want to be able to work and thrive in their communities. HB 822 does just that by supporting the ability of working Marylanders with disabilities to access and maintain Medicaid coverage.

For more information, contact any member of the DD Coalition.