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**HOUSE HEALTH AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE**

**HOUSE BILL 784**

**Task Force on Reducing Emergency Department Wait Times**

**February 28, 2024**

**POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

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. Over the years, DRM has dedicated significant resources to representation of children and adults with disabilities, many of whom require emergency room care for medical or behavioral health reasons. Long wait times can be harmful to our clients, and we have represented a number of children with developmental disabilities and behavior challenges who have become “stuck” in emergency departments because they cannot return home and no appropriate placement is available for them. It is important that the voices of people with disabilities be included on the Task Force created by this bill. It is also important that Task Force members represent the diversity of Marylanders throughout the state, since the experience of people in emergency departments may vary depending on a variety of factors. Therefore, DRM supports House Bill 784 with the following amendments:

Page 2, add: **(xi) TWO REPRESENTATIVES WITH MENTAL HEALTH DISABILITIES;**

**(xii) TWO REPRESENTATIVES WITH DEVELOPMENTAL OR PHYSICAL DISABILITIES;**

**(xiii) TASK FORCE MEMBERS SHALL REPRESENT GEOGRAPHIC, RACIAL, GENDER IDENTITY AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY.**

Please contact Leslie Seid Margolis, [lesliem@disabilityrightsmd.org](mailto:lesliem@disabilityrightsmd.org) or 443-692-2505 with questions or for more information.