



February 13, 2024

**House Bill 698**

**Estates and Trusts - Guardianship of the Person of a Disabled Person -  
Expedited Proceedings**

**House Judiciary Committee**

**Position: UNFAVORABLE**

The Anne Arundel County Department of Aging and Disabilities **OPPOSES** House Bill 698 – Estates and Trusts - Guardianship of the Person of a Disabled Person - Expedited Proceedings.

House Bill 698 would create a 10-day mandate for Guardianship of Person cases to be expedited upon petition. Currently, Anne Arundel County Department of Aging and Disabilities has 34 individuals countywide who rely on designees to make around-the-clock medical decisions with court-appointed authority. A major component of this work is to ensure that families have the necessary information to take over these cases for their loved ones. In FY24, the County was able to defer 19 of 37 cases to family members, which allowed for greater flexibility in providing care to the most vulnerable of our elders. As this bill is currently written, a 10-day mandate to expedite does not give local jurisdictions enough time to find family members who can relieve the County of Guardianship of Person cases. This will create a case backlog and put in jeopardy the rights of the individual who needs care.

Another concern of House Bill 698 is the failure to address Guardianship of Property, which is critical to the long-term care placement process, as it typically takes two to three months to access what an individual can afford through marshaling assets. This important aspect cannot be ignored, and we hope to see this included in the future.

While we understand the intent behind House Bill 698, we believe that the passage of this legislation in its current form would create more areas of concern and hinder the day-to-day operations of the Department of Aging and Disabilities. For all of these reasons, we respectfully request an **UNFAVORABLE** report on House Bill 698.