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## **Senate Finance Committee**

**March 25, 2025**

### **HB 1244: Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration Waiver Advisory Council – Establishment Position: Support**

The Arc Maryland is the largest statewide advocacy organization dedicated to protecting and advancing the rights and quality of life of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We were started in the 1950s by parents who sought a better life for their children with developmental disabilities, and since that time, our network in Maryland has grown to several chapters of The Arc who provide direct services and supports to over 8,000 people with IDD and thousands more individuals who do not access our network's provider-supported services, but rely on The Arc for free information and referral services, advice, guidance, and advocacy support and training. Our connections, supports to families and people with IDD, and representations span both models of service delivery, and we advocate for the viability of all, with a lens on quality, efficiency, informed choice, modernization, and sustainability.

We support ensuring DDA's existing Waiver Advisory Council (WAC) has a **broader representation of community advocacy organizations**, like The Arc Maryland, and the responsibility to collaborate with the DDA to conduct important work with and for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

While the bill intentions were clear in drafting, there were necessary amendments made and approved in the House to **add The Arc Maryland and The Maryland Association of Community Services** as named statewide organizational members.

This bill is important because it **codifies and expands** the existing DDA Waiver Advisory Council to provide advice and make recommendations to DDA about system design, service delivery, and quality enhancement strategies for the

Medicaid waivers operated by the department. Additionally, it ensures the DD WAC includes representatives from the statewide organizations who have supported the DDA, have extensive experience with our state systems of support, and advocate for individuals with IDD statewide, while still maintaining the ever-important balance of people with lived experience and facilitating their active involvement in the decisions that will impact their lives.

HB 1244 outlines that the purpose of the WAC is to foster meaningful engagement and establish a feedback loop with enhanced communication for all stakeholders. It will ensure the WAC adheres to person-centered thinking, diversity, equity, and inclusion principles, and evidence-based and data-driven discussion and problem solving.

Current and future beneficiaries of the Developmental Disabilities Administration's vital community supports rely on services and supports that enable them to live, work, and thrive in their communities, regardless of the service model through which they choose to receive their supports.

Finally, it is important to note that the Fiscal Note is in need of revision now, since the bill was amended to correct a technical placement error in the House. The original fiscal note contains an inaccurate statement under additional comments, and does not include consideration of that adopted corrective amendment:

*Original: Additional Comments: DDA advises that the membership of the council under the bill does not mirror the current council. DDA will have to recruit the following additional members: one additional person with lived experience participating in a DDA program and two additional family members (one with experience with self-directed services and one with traditional services). DDA will also have to remove one current coordination of community services provider and at least one current provider member to make an open seat for a representative from The Arc of Maryland. To meet the bill's requirement that the licensed or certified providers on the council include representatives from each DDA region, additional changes to current provider membership may be required.*



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With the House-amended language in this bill, that moves The Arc Maryland to the intended category of membership (under “statewide advocacy organization”, NOT “licensed and certified provider organizational member” portion of the membership), **The Arc’s inclusion in the WAC will NOT be a cause for removal of a CCS and current provider member** and shall not be cause to upset current WAC membership in any way.

Thank you for your consideration. We urge a favorable report on HB1244 as passed in the House.

Sincerely,  
Ande Kolp, Executive Director  
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