

SENATE BILL 721

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6lr3060
CF HB 1015

By: **Senator Waldstreicher**

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2026

Assigned to: Finance

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: March 19, 2026

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Developmental Disabilities ~~Administration~~ Services – Expedited Eligibility**
3 **Determinations for Recently Relocated Individuals**
4 **(Ralph’s Act)**

5 FOR the purpose of requiring ~~that~~ the Maryland Department of Health to provide an
6 expedited Medicaid eligibility determination for developmental disabilities services
7 to certain individuals who ~~were determined to be eligible to receive certain~~
8 developmental disabilities services in another state be eligible to continue to receive
9 those services received certain services in another state and relocated in the State;
10 requiring the Department to establish an expedited review process for certain
11 individuals relocating to the State; ~~authorizing~~ requiring the Department to begin
12 the determination process before an individual establishes residency in the State
13 under certain circumstances; and generally relating to eligibility determinations for
14 developmental disabilities services in the State.

15 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
16 Article – Health – General
17 Section 7–101(a) and (g)
18 Annotated Code of Maryland
19 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

20 BY adding to
21 Article – Health – General
22 Section 7–404.2
23 Annotated Code of Maryland

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



(2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Health – General

7–101.

(a) In this title the following words have the meanings indicated.

(g) “Developmental disability” means a severe chronic disability of an individual that:

(1) Is attributable to a physical or mental impairment, other than the sole diagnosis of mental illness, or to a combination of mental and physical impairments;

(2) Is manifested before the individual attains the age of 22;

(3) Is likely to continue indefinitely;

(4) Results in an inability to live independently without external support or continuing and regular assistance; and

(5) Reflects the need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic care, treatment, or other services that are individually planned and coordinated for the individual.

7–404.2.

~~(A) AN INDIVIDUAL SHALL BE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE SERVICES FROM THE DEPARTMENT UNDER THIS TITLE IF:~~

(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(2) “DEPENDENT” MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL WITH DISABILITIES WHO:

(I) RELIES ON SUPPORT FROM AN IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBER WHO IS A RESIDENT OF THE STATE; OR

(II) HAS AN IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBER WHO IS A RESIDENT OF THE STATE AND ACTS AS THE INDIVIDUAL’S LEGAL GUARDIAN.

1 **(3) “IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBER” MEANS A SPOUSE, A PARENT, AN**
2 **ADOPTIVE PARENT, A STEP-PARENT, A GRANDPARENT, A STEP-GRANDPARENT, A**
3 **SIBLING, A STEP-SIBLING, A CHILD, OR A STEP-CHILD.**

4 **(B) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PROVIDE AN EXPEDITED MEDICAID**
5 **ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION FOR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SERVICES FOR**
6 **PURPOSES OF ENROLLMENT IN THE COMMUNITY PATHWAYS WAIVER TO AN**
7 **INDIVIDUAL IF:**

8 **(1) THE INDIVIDUAL:**

9 **(I) IS A DEPENDENT ~~OF AN IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBER;~~**

10 **(II) RECEIVED HOME- AND COMMUNITY-BASED WAIVER**
11 **SERVICES OR SIMILAR SERVICES UNDER A SIMILAR ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN**
12 **ANOTHER STATE FOR THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING 10 YEARS; AND**

13 **(III) MOVED TO THE STATE TO LIVE WITH THE IMMEDIATE**
14 **FAMILY MEMBER ON THE DEATH OR INCAPACITATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL’S**
15 **CARETAKER IN THE OTHER STATE; AND**

16 **(2) THE IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBER ON WHOM THE INDIVIDUAL IS**
17 **DEPENDENT HAS RESIDED IN THE STATE FOR THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING 2**
18 **YEARS.**

19 ~~**(B) (1) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ESTABLISH AN EXPEDITED PROCESS TO**~~
20 ~~**DETERMINE WHETHER AN INDIVIDUAL MEETS THE CRITERIA UNDER SUBSECTION**~~
21 ~~**(A) OF THIS SECTION AND IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER THIS TITLE.**~~

22 ~~**(2) THE PROCESS ESTABLISHED UNDER THIS SUBSECTION SHALL**~~
23 ~~**REQUIRE THAT A DETERMINATION BE COMPLETED WITHIN 30 DAYS.**~~

24 **(C) (1) IN PROVIDING EXPEDITED ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATIONS UNDER**
25 **SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL:**

26 **(I) PRIORITIZE COMPLETED APPLICATIONS FOR REVIEW ON**
27 **RECEIPT;**

28 **(II) TO THE EXTENT AUTHORIZED BY LAW, RELY ON**
29 **DOCUMENTATION, DIAGNOSTIC EVALUATIONS, ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATIONS**
30 **FROM THE INDIVIDUAL’S PREVIOUS STATE OF RESIDENCE, AND ANY OTHER**
31 **DOCUMENTATION THAT THE DEPARTMENT RELIES ON WHEN MAKING OTHER**
32 **DETERMINATIONS UNDER THIS TITLE; AND**

1 (III) COMPLETE EACH EXPEDITED ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION
 2 WITHIN 60 BUSINESS DAYS AFTER THE RECEIPT OF A COMPLETE APPLICATION.

3 (2) IN PROVIDING AN EXPEDITED ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION
 4 UNDER SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION, THE DEPARTMENT MAY NOT WAIVE
 5 SUBSTANTIVE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS ESTABLISHED UNDER THIS TITLE OR
 6 REQUIREMENTS ESTABLISHED BY REGULATION FOR THE ASSIGNMENT OF A
 7 SERVICE PRIORITY CATEGORY.

8 ~~(C)~~ (D) IF AN INDIVIDUAL HAS BEEN DETERMINED UNDER THIS SECTION
 9 TO BE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE SERVICES, THE INDIVIDUAL SHALL BE:

10 (1) PLACED IN THE CRISIS RESOLUTION CATEGORY; AND

11 (2) GIVEN ACCESS TO WAIVER SERVICES THROUGH THE MOST
 12 APPROPRIATE RESERVE CATEGORY AS DETERMINED BASED ON THE SERVICES THE
 13 INDIVIDUAL RECEIVED IN THE INDIVIDUAL'S PREVIOUS STATE OF RESIDENCE.

14 (E) IF THE DEPARTMENT DETERMINES THAT AN INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS NOT
 15 YET ESTABLISHED RESIDENCY IN THE STATE MEETS THE CRITERIA ESTABLISHED
 16 UNDER SUBSECTION (B)(1)(I) AND (II) AND (2) OF THIS SECTION, THE DEPARTMENT
 17 SHALL DETERMINE WHETHER THE INDIVIDUAL HAS A DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY
 18 AS DEFINED UNDER § 7-101(G) OF THIS TITLE.

19 ~~(D) THE DEPARTMENT MAY DETERMINE, BEFORE AN INDIVIDUAL~~
 20 ~~ESTABLISHES RESIDENCY IN THE STATE:~~

21 ~~(1) WHETHER AN INDIVIDUAL IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE SERVICES;~~

22 ~~(2) THE APPROPRIATE SERVICE PRIORITY CATEGORY; AND~~

23 ~~(3) WHETHER THE INDIVIDUAL IS ELIGIBLE FOR CRISIS RESOLUTION~~
 24 ~~SERVICES.~~

25 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
 26 ~~October 1, 2026~~ July 1, 2027.