



Maryland Occupational Therapy Association

PO Box 36401, Towson, Maryland 21286 ♦ motamembers.org

Committee: House Appropriations Committee
Bill Number: House Bill 718
Title: State Coordinator for Autism Strategy and Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs – Mandated Appropriation
Hearing Date: February 17, 2021
Position: Support

The Maryland Occupational Therapy Association (MOTA) supports *House Bill 718 – State Coordinator for Autism Strategy and Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs – Mandated Appropriation*. This bill requires an annual appropriation to fully implement legislation passed by the General Assembly in 2020.

Occupational therapy practitioners include both occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants. We provide habilitative services to individuals with autism spectrum disorders across the lifespan. We know first-hand the difficulties many adults with autism, and their families, experience as they leave school and enter adulthood. This includes limits on health care visits for adults and an overall lack of coordination to community supports.

MOTA supported HB 847 in 2020 to establish a state coordinator in the Department of Disabilities (MDOD) and an advisory stakeholder group to develop a strategic plan on autism-related services. MOTA was disappointed that the Department of Disabilities did not convene the Advisory Stakeholder Group during the 2020 interim as we are included as a representative on the group. We hope that having an annual budget allocation for the staff position within MDOD will facilitate the full implementation of last year’s legislation.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony, and we urge a favorable vote. If we can provide any further information, please contact Rachael Faulkner at rfaulkner@policypartners.net or (410) 693-4000.