



THE COORDINATING CENTER R
INSPIRED SOLUTIONS

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 Coordinating Center (The Center) supports *House Bill 718 – State Coordinator for Autism Strategy and Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs – Mandated Appropriation*. This bill requires the Governor to allocate annual funding, starting in FY 2023, for the State Coordinator for Autism Strategy located in the Maryland Department of Disabilities.

The Center is an independent, care coordination organization with 38 years of experience, coordinating services for more than 10,000 people with disabilities and complex medical needs across the state. We currently serve as the care coordination provider in four jurisdictions under the Maryland Medicaid Autism Waiver, working with children and their families through early adulthood. We know first-hand the challenges young adults face when leaving the education system, including planning for the loss of services and supports under an Individual Education Program (IEP), 504 Plan, or Autism Waiver, as these programs are limited to children and youth under the age of 21.

During the 2020 legislative session, the Center strongly supported HB 847 to create a permanent position within MDOD and develop a strategic plan for addressing autism-related needs in the state. We were disappointed that even without the coordinator position filled, that the stakeholder group was not convened. We hope that with this funding allocation, that MDOD will finally implement the 2020 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.