



MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COALITION

Dedicated to the rights and quality of life for people with developmental disabilities in Maryland

Health Appropriations Committee

February 17, 2021

HB 718: State Coordinator for Autism Strategy and Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism - Related Needs-Mandated Appropriation Letter of Information



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The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Coalition is comprised of five statewide organizations that are committed to improving the opportunities and outcomes for Marylanders with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

All people with disabilities deserve to receive the supports they need in order to live, learn, work and thrive in communities of their choice. Barriers to education, employment, healthcare, housing, personal safety and other community supports are obstacles faced by the cross-disability community. The need is great:

- An estimated 21.5% of all people in Maryland have a disability, yet 42.6% of people in Maryland between 21 and 64 are unemployed;
- 21.5% of Marylanders with a disability live below the poverty line;
(the statistics above are from [Cornel Univeristy: Statistics on Disability](#) and refer to the population of people who are non-institutionalized)
- Maryland's public and independent four-year institutions report that 6,662 students were registered as students with disabilities (2017 Maryland Higher Ed Report)
- There are an estimated 500 people who receive residential, employment, and other supports from the Developmental Disabilities Administration who are diagnosed with Autism, many with co-occurring disabilities.
- The CDC reports that roughly 10.5% have a mobility disability.

To respond to the many barriers faced by people with disabilities, the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) is charged with "coordinating and improving the delivery of services to individuals with disabilities in the state of Maryland." Towards this end, MDOD produces a [statewide disabilities plan](#) every 4 years, in consultation with the [Maryland Commission on Disabilities](#), to identify barriers to housing, employment, healthcare, transitioning youth, community living, transportation, etc., for all Marylanders with disabilities.

The needs of people with Autism and their families are important to this body. The MGA previously authorized the formation of a commission to consider the needs of people with Autism when the MGA passed [SB 963](#) in 2009 and created the [Maryland Commission on Autism](#) ("the Commission"). The Commission had a membership and charge substantially similar to the bill before you today, and produced a report in 2012, [Addressing the Needs of Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders in Maryland](#), which is readily available online. Its key findings include recommendations for a statewide system of care.

The DD Coalition believes strongly that all Marylanders with disabilities deserve the improved life outcomes that accompany additional resources and the identification and elimination of barriers to community inclusion.

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