



THE COORDINATING CENTER R  
INSPIRED SOLUTIONS

**Committee:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Bill Number:** House Bill 718  
**Title:** State Coordinator for Autism Strategy and Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs – Location and Funding  
**Hearing Date:** March 23, 2021  
**Position:** Support as Amended

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The Coordinating Center (The Center) supports as amended *House Bill 718 – State Coordinator for Autism Strategy and Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs – location and Funding*. This bill requires moves the State Coordinator for Autism Strategy to the Governor’s Office of Community Initiatives.

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 the Maryland Department of Disabilities (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 the support of the Governor’s Office of Community Initiatives, that the State can begin to 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](mailto:rfaulkner@policypartners.net) or (410) 693-4000.