



Maryland Occupational Therapy Association

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

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

The Maryland Occupational Therapy Association (MOTA) supports as amended *House Bill 718 – State Coordinator for Autism Strategy and Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs – Location and Funding*. As amended, this bill relocates the State Coordinator for Autism Strategy from the Maryland Department of Disabilities to the Governor’s Office of Community Initiatives.

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 fill the position or convene the Advisory Stakeholder Group during the 2020 interim as we are included as a representative on the group. We are hopeful that HB 718 will enable 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.