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Disability Rights Maryland

Testimony before the House Health and Government Operations Committee

March 2, 2021

House Bill 849 – Public Health - Medical Records - Fees

POSITION: SUPPORT

Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) is Maryland's designated Protection & Advocacy agency, and is federally mandated to advance the civil rights of individuals with disabilities. DRM is a nonprofit law firm that provides free legal services to extremely low income individuals with disabilities. DRM is reminded on a daily basis by our clients just how difficult it is to obtain federal and state disability benefits, and the long waits – often several years in the case of Social Security or Veterans benefits -- before benefits are finally awarded. During the time while individuals wait for a disability eligibility determination, they often endure severe financial hardships. Situations where the individual is facing eviction and homelessness, utility shut-offs, and food scarcity are not unusual. Having to pay fees for copies of medical records to be provided to the government as part of a disability benefit determination often presents a severe hardship. For this reason we support HB 849's proposed prohibition on healthcare provider charges to individuals for preparing, copying, and mailing medical records needed to support a needs-based disability benefits eligibility determination.

Disability Right Maryland recommends that HB 849 be given a favorable report. For more information, please contact Luciene Parsley, Esq. at 410-727-6352, ext 2494 or lucienep@disabilityrightsmd.org.