



## Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

### Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

March 3, 2022

#### **SB 832: Public Institutions of Higher Education – Students with Chronic Health Conditions – Case Manager**

Position: **Support**

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council) is an independent public policy organization that creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need. As such, increasing access to higher education opportunities for people with developmental disabilities, including people with significant disabilities, is one of the DD Council's priorities. **The DD Council supports SB 832.**

SB 832 **promotes inclusion and accountability, and is a critical step to expand access to higher education for individuals with disabilities.** It does this by requiring each public institute of higher education designate a case manager that will:

- Coordinate services among different departments;
- Provide information to students about available supports and services;
- Collect data and information on programs, services, and outcomes.

This is critical because:

- Research shows that receiving a college education and experiencing that exciting time in life is as important for students with disabilities as for those without.<sup>i</sup>
- **Adequate services and supports are essential to academic success.**
- **The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which provides services and supports for children with disabilities, ages birth to 21, does not provide supports needed in college, such as education coaches, assistive technology, tutors, or natural supports required to learn.**
- **Individuals with disabilities who attend post-secondary education are more likely to be employed, earning more and requiring less supports.**

**The time to create access to inclusive higher education opportunities for all students, including those with developmental disabilities in Maryland is now.** This is what people with disabilities and their families want – opportunities to continue their education and learn, live, and participate in campus life alongside their peers without disabilities.

Students with disabilities who attend college with the services and supports necessary to succeed not only acquire valuable knowledge, but learn life skills as well, leading to more independence. The designation of a case manager for students is another important step to increase access and opportunity to college experiences for students with disabilities.

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<sup>i</sup> January 2012 *The Higher Education Opportunity Act: Impact on Students with Disabilities*. Madaus, Kowitt, and Laylor.