



# Montgomery County

## Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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**HB 1403**

**DATE: March 15, 2022**

**SPONSOR: Delegate Peña-Melnyk, et al.**

**ASSIGNED TO: Health and Government Operations**

**CONTACT PERSON: Leslie Frey (leslie.frey@montgomerycountymd.gov)**

**POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT- Department of Health and Human Services**

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### **Maryland Department of Health - Waiver Programs - Waitlist Reduction (End the Wait Act)**

House Bill 1403 requires the Maryland Department of Health to develop a plan to reduce the waitlists for eight of the Department's Medicaid waivers, including its Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waivers, by 50% beginning in Fiscal Year 2024.

Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (MCDHHS) supports increasing the number of individuals in the State served by HCBS. Maryland maintains one of the largest waiting lists for HBCS in the country<sup>1</sup>, and MCDHHS wholeheartedly supports the intent of the bill to increase the number of Marylanders served by these waivers. However, the State struggles with staff shortages and backlogs with the current workload of waiver participants, which causes delays in individuals initiating services and gaining approval for annual recertification. MCDHHS has observed delays in processing waiver applications, obtaining nurse assessments, assigning cases to a Supports Planning Agency, and reviewal and approval of Plans of Services- all critical elements of an individual participating in HCBS programs.

Because of the current staffing issues at MDH, MCDHHS respectfully requests that House Bill 1403 be amended to have the plan address existing barriers to HCBS waiver participation, including an analysis of the staffing shortages and backlogs, and a prospective course of action to implement the recommendations raised in this analysis. MCDHHS urges the committee to adopt this amendment and issue a favorable report on House Bill 1403.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://files.kff.org/attachment/Issue-Brief-Key-State-Policy-Choices-About-Medicaid-Home-and-Community-Based-Services>