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February 22, 2022

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: House Bill 1051 Elderly Individuals - Howard County and Montgomery County Adult Day
Health Care Services Pilot Program and Task Force - FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Members of the Committee,

I am appearing before you today on behalf of Sevita Health in support of House Bill 1051.

Sevita Health, formerly the MENTOR NETWORK, is a leading provider of home and community-based specialty health care. Its 40,000 employees serve more than 50,000 individuals. These are adults and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and individuals with complex care needs.

Sevita is a major provider of medical day care services, known as "Adult Day Health," which is a structured group program that provides health, social and related support services to functionally disabled adults. Many recipients of this service are also Medicaid beneficiaries.

Traditionally, these services have been provided in centers to which enrollees are transported by the program. Sevita operates forty (40) centers in five (5) states countrywide, with seven (7) centers in Maryland, four (4) are in Montgomery County and two (2) are in Howard County. There are nearly 5,000 registered adult day care centers countrywide with a total of several hundred thousand enrollees.

House Bill 1051 is a direct response to the changing health care needs of this fragile population. This change has accelerated during the pandemic. Early on in the pandemic, like many businesses and gathering places, adult day care centers were forced to close. The needs of their enrollees, continued, and Sevita and other providers were forced to adjust their practices in order to deliver necessary services to enrollees remotely.

This has been a learning experience for Sevita and the industry, and Sevita brought a concept to Maryland elected officials proposing a study and pilot program that would build on what it has learned during the last two years. In sum, the Sevita concept is to provide needed services beyond the four walls of each of its adult day care facilities, thus providing such services to a broader population of eligible individuals.

There are two important concepts that will be examined during the study/pilot program process. One concept is to develop an "integrator," which is a person or facility that would work closely with enrollees to determine whether additional services are needed. For example, one needed service could be home health care for an enrollee. In the current system, an enrollee would have to identify his/her need, and then locate and contact a home health care provider. In the proposed program, the integrator would assist the enrollee in this process. This process of consultation is also known as "defragmenting" certain health care services and their delivery. If successful, the pilot program will target necessary services for individual enrollees and assist those individuals in accessing such services.

A second concept to be examined could, if proven, lead to superior health outcomes at lower costs for the health system. It focuses on the tendency of some enrollees, who may be suffering from social isolation or similar issues, to contact emergency services (9-1-1) when there is no actual medical need for such services. Summoning an emergency vehicle, coupled with emergency room services, is an extremely expensive health care service. If an integrator, in the pilot program, could identify and prevent the potential for such inappropriate use of emergency room services, there could be considerable savings to the health care system as a whole.

Although House Bill 1051 is statewide in its application, the Committee will note that the pilot program and study will be conducted in Montgomery and Howard Counties. We are grateful to our bill sponsors for reaching out to these counties to provide support for the pilot program and staffing for the accompanying study.

We respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 1051.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Bryson F. Popham". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Bryson F. Popham