

Written Testimony – SB 572 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Employed Individuals With Disabilities (EID)

Please favorably support SB 572

This written testimony was provided by Joshua Basile. Joshua is a C4-5 Quadriplegic paralyzed below the shoulders and a power wheelchair user. Joshua has been enrolled in the EID program since 2013. The current EID program has limited his ability to pursue a career of his choice and to get married. The EID program has 850 enrollees with disabilities. The current rules have made it difficult for enrollment and have punished enrollees for earning income, saving for the future, and getting married. It is essential that we pass SB 572 and HB 6572 help Maryland workers with disabilities and those with disabilities wishing to pursue employment to not be punished. Majority of the EID enrollees with disabilities rely on Medicaid to survive. The EID program is the only option to maintain Medicaid and maintain employment.

An amendment was made to SB 572 and HB 657. The amendment in SB 572:

15-138 (D) (2) - Change [THE DEPARTMENT MAY NOT LIMIT ELIGIBILITY TO RECEIVE EID PROGRAM SERVICES BASED ON:] "ANY ASSETS OR RESOURCES OF THE APPLICANT OR THE APPLICANT'S SPOUSE." to "ANY ASSETS OR RESOURCES OF THE APPLICANT'S SPOUSE."

This amendment would keep an asset and resource limit test on an applicant. MDH sole objection to the bill "MDH advises that, in combination with removing the income limit (as required in the bill and included in MDH's proposal), elimination of the asset test for applicants creates a substantial fiscal impact on Medicaid by significantly expanding eligibility for the EID program. Thus, Medicaid expenditures (50% general funds, 50% federal funds) increase by a significant amount beginning in fiscal 2024 due to anticipated increased enrollment in the EID program." (Fiscal note)

MDH provides that thousands of new enrollees will be joining the EID program because of the removal of an asset and resource limit on an applicant. The fiscal note provides: "Individuals receiving federal Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) cannot earn more than \$1,260 per month (\$2,110 for a blind person) without being considered engaging in SGA. After a specified period in which income is permitted to exceed the SGA amount, SSDI benefits are terminated. MDH advises that an estimated 1,200 individuals who have lost SSDI coverage due to SGA will join the EID program under changes to the program already in progress. However, by eliminating the asset test for applicants under the bill, MDH estimates that an additional 10,897 individuals who have lost SSDI benefits due to SGA would become eligible for EID."

As such, by amending the asset and resource limit on an applicant, the fiscal note should be minor given the fact that the projected enrollees in the fiscal note will no longer be eligible to join the EID program.

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