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SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
HB 870: Division of Rehabilitation Services and Developmental Disabilities
Administration - Memorandum of Understanding
March 23, 2023
Position: Support

Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) is the protection and advocacy organization for the state of Maryland; the mission of the organization, part of a national network of similar agencies, is to advocate for the legal rights of people with disabilities throughout the state. DRM's work encompasses individual cases and systemic advocacy. DRM has a long history of representing students with disabilities in special education matters, including older students who are preparing to transition out of the school system. DRM is also responsible for advocating on behalf of beneficiaries of social security payments who face barriers to employment.

For the past six months, DRM has served in its P&A capacity on the Commission to Study the Division of Rehabilitative Services (the Commission). One of the Commission's responsibilities was to consider methods for improving the relationship and communication between transition professionals at the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) and the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA). In its interim report, the Commission recommended DORS enter a memorandum of understanding with DDA to "enable DORS to access the necessary medical, psychological, and school documentation of DDA applicants seeking DORS services." DRM supported this recommendation and agrees that access to medical, psychological, and school documentation will support DORS in better serving consumers.

To this end, the Commission also recommended a deep dive be conducted into the DORS and DDA documentation requirements to streamline the necessary supporting documentation of services. As Commission-member, Parents' Place of Maryland noted in their comments before the last Commission meeting, there is a need for a formalized data-sharing and partnership process that ensures the timely flow of information between DORS, DDA, and Community Rehabilitation Providers.

For these reasons, DRM supports House Bill 870.

Please reach out to Megan Jones at meganj@disabilityrightsmd.org 443-228-8655 with any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Megan Jones