

Testimony to the Senate Finance Committee
SB790 Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Employed Individuals with Disabilities
Position: Favorable

March 9, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401
cc: Members, Finance Committee

The Honorable Chair Beidle and Members of the Committee:

My parents and I live in Maryland and am writing to urgently support SB 790, a vital bill seeking to eliminate the upper age limit for the Employed Individuals with Disabilities (EID) Program and revise eligibility criteria for asset and income.

At 70, my mother courageously cares for both my father, a dialysis patient with a below-knee amputation, and myself, a quadriplegic due to spinal muscular atrophy. I, at 41, rely on round-the-clock support. Her dedication amid her own health issues with hypothyroidism, speaks volumes of her sacrifices for our family.

My father, aged 71, has faced a myriad of health challenges, including stage V end-stage chronic kidney disease and diabetes. Despite enduring hospitalizations for severe pneumonia, Covid-19, gangrene, and a below-knee amputation, his determination to recover remains unyielding.

However, the exhaustive nature of his medical treatments has led to him exceeding his Medicare coverage limits, resulting in a staggering financial burden of \$630 per day to sustain inpatient rehabilitation services, including physical therapy (PT) and occupational therapy (OT). Despite facing dialysis treatments three days a week and intensive inpatient therapy six days a week, my father remains committed to contributing to our family's well-being by working remotely. His dedication, especially at 71, is truly inspiring.

Yet, mounting medical expenses have left us overwhelmed and uncertain about our financial future. The age limitations and income and asset thresholds for Medicaid jeopardize our eligibility, adding to our worries. Medicaid coverage would alleviate this burden and enable access to home-based care personal attendant services for long-term and therapy at home, critical for his recovery.

SB 790 is a crucial step in rectifying discriminatory limitations in the EID Program, ensuring fair access to vital services for individuals aged 65 and older who continue to work. Medicaid is essential for older individuals with disabilities to access community-based services and thrive independently.

I respectfully request your thoughtful consideration and support of SB 790. Your advocacy in this matter would not only secure essential care for my father but also provide significant relief for our entire family and countless others confronting similar challenges.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Kavita Krishnaswamy