



DATE: February 14, 2024
BILL: HB 215: Human Services - Attendant Care Program - Ongoing Additional Supports
COMMITTEE: Health and Government Operations
POSITION: Support

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk,

The Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) is pleased to submit this letter of support for our Departmental, HB 215 Human Services - Attendant Care Program - Ongoing Additional Supports.

Under House Bill 215, Ongoing Additional Supports would be added as a reimbursable expense to the Attendant Care Program.

The Attendant Care Program was established in 1982 with the goal of assisting individuals with permanent physical disabilities who are living in the community maintain employment, attend an institution of post-secondary education, or prevent placement in a nursing facility.

The world has changed drastically since the program's inception. Through the use of modern-day advancements and technology, there are steps that can be taken to revitalize the program, make it more accessible, and give participants more power in directing their services.

Statute dictates the goals of the program be met by providing direct reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for attendant care services. These are services provided by an individual who is hired to assist with activities of daily living such as personal hygiene, house work, food preparation, and mobility at home or in the community.

This bill would add flexibilities to the program by including Ongoing Additional Supports as reimbursable expenses in addition to Attendant Care Services. Ongoing Additional Supports are continual supports that increase an individual's independent performance of an essential activity of daily living, self-care, or mobility. Through the use of modern-day advancements and technology, participants could have access to grocery delivery services, laundry services, prescription delivery, ride-share services, assistance with service animal expenses, and more.

The added flexibilities of Ongoing Additional Supports also make the Attendant Care Program more equitable and accessible to Marylanders with disabilities. Attendant care or personal care services are expensive and cost-prohibitive to many. Being a reimbursement model, individuals must cover the upfront expenses of this type of care – putting the program out of reach for many. By allowing a menu of support options at varying price points, we lower the barrier of entry, and allow more individuals to access the program

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter of support. If you have any questions please contact Lisa Belcastro, Deputy Secretary, Lisa.Belcastro@maryland.gov, (443) 941-5094.

Sincerely,


Carol A. Beatty, Secretary