

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 153 Medical Records - Fees - Attorneys Representing
Patients
February 7, 2024
Health and Government Operations

Good afternoon,

My name is Arun Malhotra. I am the Director of Case Management at London Disability, and my work for the past 12 years has focused on assisting people with serious mental and physical illnesses and helping them with their Social Security disability cases. I appreciate the opportunity to provide my testimony in support of this bill.

This bill is critical in my efforts to assist people who have applied for disability benefits due to being seriously ill, are homeless, or facing imminent threat of homelessness. Medical records are imperative to prove a client's disability, however the fees associated with obtaining the medical records are very high which the client has no funds to pay for. If the client is unable to pay for the records, presenting a disability case before the Judge without proper evidence results in a denial or postponement for several months. Clients need the help of their lawyers to obtain these medical records as most of them do not have computers or fax machines to do so themselves.

London Disability pays to obtain the records; however, the cost is passed on to the clients as their out-of-pocket expenses. The invoices to obtain the records are at time ranging from \$100 to over \$800 (I can submit the high-cost invoices as evidence). In most cases, the client is unable to reimburse this expense because the client is past due on living essentials such as rent, utilities, and medication.

This bill would ensure that Marylanders who have applied for Social Security Disability benefits, who are either low income, or are homeless to access the records they need to secure vital, and often life-saving benefits such as monthly income benefits, and medical insurance to seek necessary treatment to improve their health. This is a much-needed piece of legislation, and for this reason, I support this bill and urge a favorable outcome.

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