



## Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

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Senate Finance Committee

February 13, 2025

### SB 560: Public Health - Maryland Commission on Health Equity - Membership and Purposes Letter of Information

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council), a statewide public policy organization led by people with developmental disabilities and their families, envisions Maryland as a state where people with and without disabilities live, learn, work, and play together. From this perspective, SB 56 is a step toward achieving a healthier Maryland for all.

#### WHAT does this legislation do?

- Adds to the list of members on Maryland Commission on Health Equity (Commission) to include the following roles or their designee: The Commissioner of Correction, the Secretary of the Environment, the Secretary of Veterans and Military Families, the Director of the Office of Health Care Quality, and at least one member of the Moving Forward Nursing Home Quality Coalition.
- Clarifies the work of the Commission to include the impact of (1) transportation, transition programs, and services; and (2) the proximity of health care facilities on health of residents.

#### WHY is this legislation important?

- There are many Marylanders with disabilities in need of greater equity in their health care. The National Council on Disabilities reports that people with disabilities experience more unmet medical needs and chronic conditions compared to nondisabled people. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 24% of Marylanders have a disability.
- Adults with disabilities are three times more likely to skip getting the care they need due to transportation issues.<sup>1</sup> Transportation barriers create access barriers to care and can be detrimental to long-term health.
- Working to improve health equity creates improvements for all Marylanders. Everyone benefits from addressing systemic barriers equity like better transportation and access to care.

*While investments in health equity are without question needed, including for people with disabilities, the Council believes that the amount, purpose, and timing of the funding must take into consideration the needs of other Marylanders with disabilities. Funding for this bill should not be offset by limiting essential funding for other critical needs, most immediately the Developmental Disabilities Administration community services that thousands of Marylanders depend upon.*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.rwjf.org/en/insights/our-research/2023/04/more-than-one-in-five-adults-with-limited-public-transit-access-forgo-healthcare-because-of-transportation-barriers.html>