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March 5, 2025

**House Health and Government Operations Committee
HB 1244 - Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration
Waiver Advisory Council - Establishment
Position: Favorable with Amendment**

The Maryland Association of Community Services (MACS) is a non-profit association of over 125 agencies across Maryland serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). MACS members provide residential, day and supported employment services to thousands of Marylanders, so that they can live, work and fully participate in their communities.

MACS is in support, with an amendment, of HB 1244, which seeks to codify the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration Waiver Advisory Council and expand its membership. We commend Delegates Guyton and Bagnall for their initiative to formalize the council's role in advising on critical aspects of DDA waiver programs, including system design, service delivery, and quality enhancement strategies.

We are pleased to note that the bill aims to address our concerns by proposing the inclusion of MACS as a member of this council. This is a crucial step, as recent data from the Maryland Department of Health indicates that over 82% of people using DDA-funded supports choose the community provider model, with MACS members receiving over 80% of the funding allocated to community providers. Clearly, MACS represents the largest constituency of providers and beneficiaries of DDA-funded supports.

Key Points

- ***Inclusion of MACS:*** The bill's proposal to include MACS on the council ensures that the voices of community providers are heard. This inclusion is essential for balanced representation and comprehensive policymaking.
- ***Balanced Policymaking:*** The council's role in shaping Medicaid waiver policies is crucial. MACS's participation is essential to ensure that all perspectives within the IDD service delivery landscape are adequately represented, preventing an imbalance that favors one model over another.
- ***Commitment to Collaboration:*** We are eager to bring our extensive experience and insights to the table and work collaboratively with the Developmental Disabilities Administration and all stakeholders to enhance the quality and accessibility of services for people with developmental disabilities.

We support ensuring that the existing Waiver Advisory Council has broader representation of key stakeholder organizations. To achieve this, we propose the following amendments:

- Add The Arc Maryland and Maryland Association of Community Services (MACS) explicitly as members in section 7-12B-03.
- Enhance section 7-12B-05(A)(2) to ensure the Waiver Advisory Council provides advice and makes recommendations to DDA about service delivery and access to services, including strategies for cost efficiency, flexibility, and system modernization.
- Clarify that voting members appointed under certain sections are appointed for 2-year terms and eligible for 2 consecutive terms.

In conclusion, we urge the committee to adopt these proposed amendments to strengthen the language that would include MACS as a member of the council. This will ensure that every facet of service provision is represented.

Respectfully,

Laura Howell
Chief Executive Officer
Maryland Association of Community Services