

**Health and Government Operations Committee  
House Bill 1478: Public Health – Home Health Care Providers – Directory**

**March 11, 2025**

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

Thank you Madame Chair Pena-Melnyk and Committee Members for the opportunity to provide written testimony for House Bill 1478: Public Health – Home Health Care Providers - Directory. Disability Rights Maryland (DRM – formerly Maryland Disability Law Center) is the federally designated Protection and Advocacy agency in Maryland, mandated to advance the civil rights of people with disabilities. DRM works to increase opportunities for Marylanders with disabilities to be integrated into their communities, live independently and access high-quality, affordable health care.

The pivotal 1999 *Olmstead v. LC* Supreme Court decision held that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)<sup>1</sup> prohibited the unjustified segregation of individuals with disabilities.<sup>2</sup> As a result of this landmark decision, individuals with disabilities across the United States are now able to have a real choice in where they receive services to live independently. Many individuals rely on home health care providers through residential service agencies to assist them with activities of daily living (ADLs),<sup>3</sup> such as bathing, dressing and feeding, within the comfort of their own home.

Unfortunately, consumers who rely on these services can experience difficulty in finding home care providers who best meet their needs. For individuals with disabilities who require higher levels of care, it can be even more difficult to find home care workers who are trained in providing specialized support. In turn, many individuals turn to institutions just to receive the care they need.

House Bill 1478 can help ensure that individuals with disabilities continue to have choice in how they receive their care. Even though the Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ) maintains similar directories for licensed home health agencies<sup>4</sup>, the proposed directory will provide additional transparency by including the skillsets, specializations and work history of the home health care providers. Consequently, consumers can choose providers who are suitable for their needs and preferences, ensuring that they are receiving the quality care that they are entitled to.

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<sup>1</sup> 42 U.S.C. §12101.

<sup>2</sup> *Olmstead v. L.C.*, 527 U.S. 581 (1999); 42 U.S.C.

<sup>3</sup> Katz S. Assessing self-maintenance: activities of daily living, mobility, and instrumental activities of daily living. *J Am Geriatr Soc.* 1983 Dec;31(12):721-7.

<sup>4</sup> OHCQ Licensee Directories <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/publish?EQBCT=08adff96ac8c4d18a97bf909162a2250>

DRM Testimony, House Bill 1478

March 11, 2025

Page 2

The *Olmstead* decision served as an important turning point in the disability rights movement, helping to ensure that individuals with disabilities could direct their own care. However, individuals with disabilities continue to be in a harmful cycle of oppression and inequity that prevents them from having the full ability to control their own healthcare. House Bill 1478 can help ensure that Maryland is a part of the solution to ending that cycle, ultimately helping to create a future that allows people with disabilities to feel respected and equal in society.

For these very reasons, Disability Rights Maryland supports House Bill 1478 and urges a favorable report.

Respectfully,

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