

Testimony of Jeneva Stone
Caring Across Maryland member
HB 1478: Home Health Care Providers Directory
Position: Favorable

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and members of the Health, Government & Operations Committee:

My name is Jeneva Stone, and I am the parent of Rob Stone, a disability advocate and participant in the DDA's self-directed services program. We urge a favorable report on HB 1478.

As a self-directed participant, Rob must find and hire his own direct support staff, otherwise known as "inclusion aides." While we are able to do this by networking with other families in self-direction, a Home Health Care Providers Directory would increase our options.

I'm excited about a tool that would allow us to search for experience that included disability. I would also advocate for subgroup search terms such as "assistive technology" or "alternative communication," as well as "community engagement activities." I'm sure other disabled persons could suggest additional search categories.

A home care directory would also allow Residential Service Agencies to tap into the self-direction market, potentially increasing the number of home care workers who are trained to assist those with disabilities. Finally, as an additional "plus," self-directed participants often have difficulty finding and retaining back-up staff, which is key to the participant's independence. Contracting with an RSA that had staff competent in inclusion services would ease this burden for us.

Thank you for considering this bill.