



Bill: SB 1027/HB 1244- Developmental Disabilities Administration Waiver Advisory Council-Establishment

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Spectrum Support, a non-profit providing support services for people with disabilities, I am writing to express our support for SB 1027/HB 1244, which proposes the establishment of the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration Waiver Advisory Council. I believe that this bill represents an important step forward in ensuring that the voices of individuals with lived experience, their families, and service providers are central to shaping Medicaid waiver programs in our state.

Spectrum had a resident who has lived in one of our homes for over 20 years and is dually diagnosed, which means periodically he returns to the state institutions for a few months to get a “reset”. He went to that facility in April 2024 and became eligible for release from the hospital late summer and was expected to be home in October. However, because of continuous delays with his waiver reapplication, he was given a potential discharge date of January 16th. After additional paperwork delays, he was finally released to go home on January 29, 2025.

These delays were unnecessary and burdensome and led to additional concerns, including depression and confusion. Said individual would contact Spectrum staff daily to find out when he would get out and did not understand what was keeping him or why the process was not completed sooner. Unfortunately, Spectrum did not have any answers. While this delay occurred, the State of Maryland was paying higher rates for his hospital stay, Spectrum had a vacant room in an apartment and his hospital bed could have been used for someone else.

By creating a dedicated advisory council, the bill will foster a system that is more responsive and accountable to the needs of Maryland’s diverse community. The inclusion of a wide range of stakeholders—from representatives of advocacy groups and licensed providers to family members with firsthand experience—will enable the Developmental Disabilities Administration to design and deliver services that are truly person-centered. This approach not only enhances service delivery but also promotes transparency and public trust through regular, publicly accessible meetings and a structured feedback process.

For these reasons, we respectfully request your favorable vote.

Sincerely,

Cindy Freeman, Executive Director