



HB 430: Employed Individuals With Disabilities Program - Upper Age Limit - Prohibition

Testimony of the Maryland Independent Living Network

SUPPORT – Favorable

House Health & Government Operations Committee, February 12, 2025

The Maryland Independent Living Network is a coalition of the Maryland Statewide Independent Living Council and the seven Maryland-based Centers for Independent Living (CIL). CILs are created by federal law. CILs work to enhance the civil rights and quality of services for people with disabilities. There are seven CILs located throughout Maryland, operated by and for people with disabilities. CILs provide Information and Referral, Advocacy, Peer Support, Independent Living Skills training, and Transition Services to individuals with disabilities in their communities.

The Independent Living Network submits this written testimony in **support** of HB 430.

HB 430 prohibits the Maryland Department of Health from establishing an upper age limit for eligibility to receive Employed Individuals with Disabilities (EID) Program services. EID is funded through Medicaid.

Currently, an individual with a disability enrolled in EID in Maryland is automatically disenrolled at the age of 65.

A person enrolled in the EID program can access health services that include but are not limited to physician and clinic visits, inpatient and outpatient care, mental health services, prescription drugs, and personal care services at the home and workplace.

For certain individuals, enrollment is free; others individuals pay a fee ranging from about \$25 - \$55 each month to maintain enrollment in the program. The monthly fee is based on income.

Older workers with disabilities often need Medicaid even more than younger workers with disabilities, due to health problems that increase with age. Medicaid covers essential services to enable workers with disabilities to live in the community; individuals with disabilities at the age of 65 enrolling in Medicare would not receive the services provided under Medicaid.

People with disabilities, just like their non-disabled counterparts, are more likely to be gainfully employed after reaching the age of 65.

Elimination of the age restriction will encourage people with disabilities who want to work to be able to do so and allow them to continue to be active and contributing members of their communities.

Current EID rules discriminate against older workers with disabilities. Eliminating the upper age limit of 64 will provide equity to older Marylanders with disabilities.

We appreciate the consideration of these comments.

The Maryland Independent Living Network strongly **supports** HB 430 and requests a favorable vote.

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