



Committee: **Appropriations**

Bill Numbers: **House Bill 226 - Department of Disabilities – Housing Programs and Affiliated Foundations – Establishment**

Hearing Date: **February 4, 2026**

Position: **Support**

The Coordinating Center supports House Bill 226, which establishes affordable and accessible housing as a core responsibility of the Department of Disabilities and authorizes the creation of affiliated foundations to support this work. This legislation reflects a critical understanding that housing stability is foundational to health, independence, and community integration for individuals with disabilities.

Our organization provides care coordination to nearly 10,000 Marylanders annually through Maryland Medicaid programs, including the Community First Choice Program, and other home and community-based service waivers. Many of the individuals we serve experience significant barriers related to social determinants of health, particularly access to affordable and accessible housing. Our coordinators (i.e., Case Managers, Supports Planners, Services Coordinators, Coordinators of Community Service) work daily with individuals transitioning from institutional settings to the community, as well as individuals experiencing homelessness or housing instability who require coordinated, long-term supports.

From a case management perspective, this legislation is especially important because it strengthens the State's ability to expand housing options that are integrated, accessible, and responsive to individual needs. Stable housing is often the linchpin that allows individuals with disabilities to access health care, maintain employment, and remain safely in their communities. Without appropriate housing, individuals with complex medical or behavioral health needs face increased risk of institutionalization, emergency service utilization, and poor health outcomes.

As The Department implements the housing programs and partnerships authorized under this bill, it will be essential to incorporate the practical expertise of case managers and care coordinators. Case managers bring direct, frontline insight into



the barriers individuals face in securing and maintaining housing, as well as the supports necessary for long-term stability. Meaningful input from case management professionals can help ensure that housing initiatives are person-centered, equitable, and effective for individuals with the highest levels of need.

House Bill 226 represents an important step forward in aligning housing policy with the lived realities of Marylanders with disabilities. We respectfully urge a favorable report and encourage continued engagement with case management professionals as these programs are developed and implemented.

If any additional information would be helpful, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net or (443) 926-3443.