

House Bill 1434

Maryland Department of Health – Caregiver Resource Webpage – Establishment
Senate Finance Committee Hearing

Date: March 31, 2026

Position: SUPPORT

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

My name is Cody Stevens, and I am the President and CEO of The Anchor Initiative, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting individuals with disabilities and their families across Maryland's Eastern Shore. I am also the father of a son with significant medical and developmental disabilities, and like many caregivers across our state, I have spent countless hours navigating complex systems just to locate the resources needed to support my child and my family.

House Bill 1434 would require the Maryland Department of Health to develop and maintain a centralized caregiver resource webpage that provides clear, plain-language information and links to services that support caregivers across Maryland.

The bill recognizes that caregivers must navigate multiple systems at once, including disability services, healthcare, education supports, aging services, and community resources. Today, these systems often operate in silos, with information fragmented across numerous agencies and websites. This fragmentation creates inefficiencies not only for families, but for the State itself.

It is important to clarify that while Maryland does have a number of websites and resources available, these are often specific to individual programs, agencies, or areas of caregiving. There is currently no single, centralized platform that brings together this information in a clear, coordinated, and accessible way for caregivers.

As a result, families are often required to navigate multiple disconnected systems, leading to duplication of effort, gaps in awareness, and missed opportunities to access existing supports. This lack of centralization contributes to inefficiencies not only for caregivers, but for the State's ability to ensure that services are fully utilized and aligned with intended outcomes.

When caregivers cannot quickly locate appropriate resources, it often leads to delayed care, underutilization of preventive services, and increased reliance on higher-cost interventions such as emergency care, institutional placement, or crisis services. In this way, barriers to information access can unintentionally drive up long-term costs within Maryland's healthcare and disability systems.

The proposed webpage would serve as a centralized, coordinated entry point, allowing caregivers to efficiently identify available programs, eligibility requirements, and support services. By improving navigation and access, the State can better ensure that existing services are utilized as intended, maximizing the return on current investments.

Through our work at The Anchor Initiative, Inc., we regularly assist families who are searching for help but do not know where to begin. What we consistently see is not a lack of resources, but a lack of clear, centralized access to those resources. Families often spend hours, sometimes days, searching across multiple platforms, duplicating efforts, and missing critical supports simply because the system is difficult to navigate.

House Bill 1434 offers a practical, cost-effective solution to this problem. By consolidating existing information into a single, accessible platform, Maryland can reduce inefficiencies, improve service coordination, and help families access the right supports earlier, before needs escalate into more complex and costly situations.

For caregivers balancing employment, family responsibilities, medical needs, and daily caregiving tasks, time is an incredibly limited resource. Streamlining access to information not only reduces stress but also allows caregivers to remain stable, productive, and engaged; factors that have broader economic benefits for communities and the State.

This legislation also recognizes that caregiving spans the entire lifespan, supporting families caring for children with disabilities, adults with chronic conditions, and older adults experiencing cognitive decline or other health challenges.

By improving coordination and accessibility of information, Maryland can strengthen system efficiency, reduce unnecessary costs, and better support caregivers and the individuals they serve.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 1434.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
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