

House Bill 1117

Elopement Response Devices – Insurance and Maryland Medical Assistance Program  
Coverage and Provision Under State Programs

Date: 3/13/2026

House Health and Government Operations Committee

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Madam Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, 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. More importantly, I am the father of a young man named Luke, whose journey is the reason legislation like House Bill 1117 matters so deeply to me.

Luke was born with Polymicrogyria, a rare brain malformation that affects brain development. As a result, he also lives with Lennox-Gastaut Syndrome, one of the most severe forms of epilepsy. Luke has undergone two major brain surgeries, including a full right hemispherectomy, and continues to face significant neurological and developmental challenges.

One of the realities that comes with many neurological and developmental disabilities is the risk of elopement. Like many individuals with similar conditions, Luke has experienced moments where he has left a safe environment without understanding the dangers around him. As a parent, there have been times when we found him in places that were truly terrifying, or stopped him just before he reached a situation that could have resulted in serious harm.

Elopement is not simply wandering behavior. It is a serious safety risk that can place individuals with disabilities in life-threatening situations. House Bill 1117 recognizes this reality by ensuring that elopement response devices can be considered medical devices, durable medical equipment, or assistive technology under state programs and the Maryland Medical Assistance Program. These tools—such as location-enabled wearable devices, door or window sensors, and alerting technologies—can help caregivers and support teams quickly respond when an elopement incident occurs.

For many individuals with developmental disabilities, these devices are not conveniences. They are critical safety tools that can prevent injury, tragedy, or loss of life. Importantly, this bill also includes strong protections regarding consent, privacy, and data safeguards to ensure that these technologies are used responsibly and only for safety purposes.

Legislation like HB1117 helps ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to the same level of safety support that many families already rely on today. By recognizing elopement response devices as legitimate medical and assistive technology, Maryland can help caregivers and support providers better protect some of our most vulnerable residents.

Individuals like Luke deserve every opportunity to live safely in their homes and communities.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 1117.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Cody Stevens  
President & CEO  
The Anchor Initiative, Inc.  
Eastern Shore, Maryland