



Date: March 6, 2026

From: Rob Malone, CEO, The Arc Prince George's County

To: Delegate Heather Bagnall, Chair, and House Health Committee Members

Re: Support: HB1445 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Developmental Disabilities Administration - Home- and Community-Based Services Eligibility Determinations (Maryland Protecting People With Disabilities Act)

Chair Bagnall and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to share my support for HB1445.

For individuals with developmental disabilities, services through the Developmental Disabilities Administration are not optional. They are the difference between stability and crisis, independence and institutionalization, and inclusion versus isolation.

Across Maryland, individuals and families are doing exactly what the system asks of them. They submit their waiver redeterminations on time. They upload the required documentation. They receive confirmation receipts through the Maryland Benefits system verifying their materials were received before the deadline. And yet, despite doing everything right, their services are still terminated.

Not because of neglect or noncompliance, but because their paperwork sat in a queue waiting to be processed—sometimes for 30 to 60 days. People should not lose essential services simply because their documents were waiting for someone to click “review.”

A confirmation receipt should mean security, not uncertainty. It should mean protection, not the beginning of fear. Families should never open a termination notice after being told their paperwork was received on time.

Furthermore, the PAPERWORK required to access these services is COMPLETELY overwhelming for families. There is a parent with a Ph.D., and she has been reduced to tears many times this year trying to track down where in the process her sons' funding is and figure out what changes she need to make so they can get the waiver renewed.

When waiver services are cut off due to administrative delays beyond a person's control, the consequences are immediate and severe. Medical appointments are missed. Medications go unfilled.

Critical daily supports disappear overnight. Families are forced into crisis management, scrambling to replace services that should never have been interrupted.

These disruptions do not just harm families—they waste time and resources across the entire system. Individuals are dis-enrolled for minor administrative issues, forcing everyone to repeat the entire process. **Can you imagine the hours of time being wasted across of the people, providers and agency staff?** This drains the already limited capacity of the Department of Health, DDA staff, providers, Coordinators of Community Services, and the individuals and families themselves.

The DDA and the Maryland Department of Health and the Maryland Eligibility Determination Division (EDD) is truly a hot mess, but the problems come from excessive bureaucracy, non-responsive staff (who I think are doing the best they can, but for whom the workload is just too much), and policies that punish disabled people.

If the goal is to reduce costs and improve efficiency, the administration should invest in fixing the underlying processes. There are clear opportunities to streamline these systems, yet accountability and coordination across agencies remain lacking. **Who does the administration have on staff in these agencies that drive quality and process improvement – people skilled in that discipline?**

Right now, fragmentation between departments creates unnecessary confusion and delay. One division may complete its review while another holds the case, leaving families and providers waiting for approval letters with no clear timeline or guidance.

The result is devastating. ***Some individuals who fall out of the waiver system remain locked out of services for 14 to 18 months over minor administrative issues.*** Their disability has not changed, but their access to support disappears. Families lose stability, and providers are often left with an impossible choice: stop providing essential care or continue services without reimbursement.

HB1445 is an important step toward ensuring accountability, stability, and continuity of services for Marylanders with developmental disabilities.

Thank you for your time, your leadership, and your commitment to protecting some of the most vulnerable members of our community. I urge you to move this bill forward with a favorable report.