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HB 1015 - Developmental Disabilities Administration – Services – Eligibility for Recently Relocated People (Ralph’s Act) Position: Favorable

The Maryland Association of Community Services (MACS) is a nonprofit association of over 125 agencies across Maryland serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). MACS members provide residential, day and supported employment services to thousands of Marylanders so that they can live, work and fully participate in their communities. Our members partner with the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) to deliver high-quality, community-based supports across the state.

MACS supports HB 1015, which establishes a clear and timely eligibility process for people with developmental disabilities who must relocate to Maryland after the death or loss of a parent or primary caregiver. This legislation creates a narrow and compassionate pathway for people who have received home and community-based developmental disabilities services in another state for at least 10 years and are moving to Maryland to live with a family member.

Under HB 1015, DDA would be required to issue an eligibility decision within 30 days of application in these circumstances. If determined eligible, the person would be placed on the DDA Waiting List in the Crisis Resolution Category, recognizing the urgent nature of the situation while maintaining the structure of Maryland’s existing system.

Key Points

- **Timely Eligibility Decisions:** The death or loss of a primary caregiver is one of the most destabilizing events in a person’s life. For people with significant support needs, this loss can also mean the immediate loss of housing, daily supports, and stability. A 30-day eligibility determination provides clarity and predictability during an already traumatic transition.
- **Support for Maryland Families:** In many cases, a sibling or other family member living in Maryland is the only available caregiver. Families who step forward in a time of crisis should not face prolonged uncertainty or administrative barriers when seeking to stabilize their loved one’s supports.
- **Responsible System Alignment:** Placement in the Crisis Resolution Category appropriately acknowledges the urgency of these situations while preserving fairness and integrity within

Maryland's existing DDA Waiting List framework. The bill balances compassion with responsible system management.

- **Continuity and Stability:** People who have relied on long-term home and community-based services should not be left without a pathway to support solely because they must relocate after losing a caregiver. Ensuring continuity of services helps prevent unnecessary institutionalization, disruption, and hardship.

MACS members often work alongside families during periods of transition and crisis. Establishing a clear statutory framework for these rare but urgent circumstances strengthens the overall stability, transparency, and responsiveness of Maryland's developmental disabilities service system.

In conclusion, we respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on HB 1015.

Best regards,

Laura Howell
CEO
Maryland Association of Community Services