

Date: March 10, 2026

House Health Committee

Re: **HB1434 Maryland Department of Health - Caregiver Resource Webpage - Establishment**

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Madam Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Committee:

My name is **Maddy Ciotola** and I am the parent of a non-verbal child living with Angelman Syndrome. I am writing to express my support for **House Bill 1434**, which would establish a centralized caregiver resource webpage to help families easily access services, supports, and guidance available across Maryland.

I am one of the primary caregivers for my son, Lincoln, along with my husband. I have spent a significant amount of time working on finding resources and services like PT, OT, speech, orthotics, and other devices for him. Navigating available state resources is cumbersome, time consuming and hard to know where to get the best information. Trying to find information about the Medicaid waiver was extremely difficult, to a point that we have not even been able to pursue it yet.

House Bill 1434 recognizes that caregivers are often responsible for navigating multiple complex systems at once — including health care, disability services, aging services, education, and community resources.

A centralized caregiver webpage would provide a **clear and reliable starting point** where families can quickly identify available programs, understand eligibility requirements, and connect with appropriate resources.

For caregivers already balancing work, family responsibilities, and caregiving duties, simplifying access to information can make a meaningful difference.

We have spent countless hours navigating private insurance, which has been extremely challenging. We initially began the process of applying for Medicaid for our son because he urgently needed a safety bed to prevent self-harm or elopement during the night—an item not covered by our private insurance. After completing an extensive application on the Maryland Health Exchange and answering numerous questions, we were informed that he did not qualify due to household income, despite his documented disability.

We were then directed to multiple websites to research the Medicaid waiver program and subsequently spent additional time on the phone receiving inconsistent and often conflicting information from several representatives.

While I recognize that being able to devote this amount of time to navigating these systems is a privilege, one that I have tried to use full, we still have not reached a final answer or resolution.

It is also important to acknowledge that the flexibility I have, even while working full-time, is not something most parents of children with special needs are able to maintain. Furthermore, the ability to understand and navigate complex insurance and state systems is not shared by most families, especially those who are sole caregivers or those who must dedicate substantial time transporting their children to therapies, medical appointments, programs, and other essential services.

The time required simply to ensure a child receives the care and support they need can make maintaining full-time employment extraordinarily difficult. Adding an extensive administrative burden to access state resources only makes that goal even more unattainable for many families.

Legislation like House Bill 1434 supports broader goals of **caregiver support, coordination of services, and improved access to information across state agencies.**

When caregivers are better supported, individuals receiving care are more likely to remain safe, healthy, and supported within their communities.

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,  
Maddy Ciotola  
Mother of Lincoln, Angelman Syndrome Warrior  
Nottingham, MD