



1300 Spring St
Suite 400
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Phone: 301.576.9000
www.SEECOnline.org

MDH Developmental Disabilities Administration: DDA Budget

Position: Favorable with Amendments
Hearing Date: February 26, 2026
Committee: Appropriations – Education and Economic Development Subcommittee

In recent years, there has been improved communication and collaboration between DDA and the disability community and for that we are grateful. We also appreciate the openness and willingness to listen shown by the members of this subcommittee. This commitment to working together is critical as people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), their support providers, and families face mounting challenges on the local, state, and federal level. Partnership is the way forward.

Community providers are facing significant challenges. Hundreds of people with I/DD have been bumped off the waiver through the redetermination process, which has been marked by inconsistent communication and processes. Providers all across Maryland have continued supporting people who have lost their funding, resulting in millions of dollars in unreimbursed services.

Losing eligibility often leads to unreliable and inconsistent supports, which are at odds with the accepted best practice of consistency and stability for people with I/DD (as outlined by The Quality of Life Supports Model (QOLSM)).¹ We must ensure that the three proposed cost-savings measures in the Governor's budget don't also result in a reduced level of quality supports to people with I/DD. Therefore, any changes must be enacted thoughtfully and include dialogue with the individual, support providers of either model, and their families. Changes should be introduced gradually, on a person's PCP date instead of all changes happening on July 1st, for example. Technical support, subject matter experts, and all available resources must be used to ensure a smooth transition and a continuing level of quality supports.

In addition, any changes must be rooted in the community integration precept of the *Olmstead* Supreme Court decision; that people with disabilities have the right to live, work, and thrive in the most integrated setting as possible. Staffing is an important tool to achieve this, but not the only one; assistive technology, technical expertise, and community partnerships are some of the other ways a person can be supported to live the life of their choosing.

Our shared long-term goal should be the stability of Maryland's Developmental Disabilities Administration and the community that it supports. This requires continued dialogue,

collaboration, and cooperation underscored by a genuine commitment to listen to people with disabilities.

The DDA community has made important strides and we have the opportunity to continue to work together to meet the challenges at hand. I urge the members of the subcommittee to help ensure that the human impact of any changes at DDA are understood and that any new measures are implemented thoughtfully with the full complement of resources and expertise available. Thank you.

Warmly,
Katrina Emmerson Kugel, Government Relations

1. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0891422221002614>