



Kennedy Krieger Institute

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*A comprehensive resource
for children with disabilities*

February 26, 2020

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chairman, Senate and Taxation Committee
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SB 192 - Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2020

Dear Chairman Guzzone:

Kennedy Krieger Institute respectfully urges the Committee to reject the developmental disabilities community provider rate reductions and restore the 4% rate increase in Senate Bill 192 – Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2020.

There are over 200 organizations in Maryland that serve 25,000 developmentally disabled individuals, a fraction of the overall population of people with developmental disabilities in Maryland. These organizations depend almost exclusively on Medicaid and State funds to flow through the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration to pay for staff. These programs are critical in providing those with developmental disabilities the ability to live full and meaningful lives that ensure their safety and wellbeing, while providing them the opportunities and choices all citizens deserve.

Acute shortages of community service providers combined with increasingly difficult workforce recruitment and retention has created an alarming situation for our most vulnerable citizens facing an imminent cessation of critical services. Half of all provider organizations have a direct support vacancy rate over 16%, with one in four provider organizations having a direct support vacancy rate of over 24%.

Vacancies are attributable due to the high stress, low wage work. For example, a direct service professional can make more working for a big-box retailer than in the support staff space. This situation, already precarious, will be exacerbated by the proposed cut to the rate increase in the BRFA. This cut, by diminishing the availability of already limited community supports and resources, will very likely have severe consequences to the health, education, independence, and employability of individuals with developmental disabilities.

Kennedy Krieger encourages legislators to respond to the workforce crisis of the developmental disabilities provider community and reject the rate reductions in the BRFA.

Sincerely,

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