

House Bill 80
Home and Community Based Services Waivers – Participation and Applications

Health and Government Operations Committee
February 9, 2022

Support

Catholic Charities of Baltimore supports HB 80 which would end the waiting list for the Maryland Medicaid Home & Community Based Services Options Waiver.

Inspired by the Gospel to love, serve and teach, Catholic Charities provides care and services to improve the lives of Marylanders in need. As the largest human service provider in Maryland working with tens of thousands of Marylanders each year, we recognize the dignity of individuals to receive services in the community avoiding institutionalization when possible.

Catholic Charities offers a spectrum of services to older adults including a reference phone line, senior apartment buildings, adult medical day care, an assisted living facility and a long term care facility. Through this experience we have learned that most seniors prefer to age in place and when that is not possible, they want to age in their community in the least restrictive environment possible. Institutionalization in a long-term care facility is generally their last choice.

The Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services Options Waiver (HCBOW) permits the state to provide an array of home and community-based services that assist Medicaid beneficiaries to live in the community and avoid institutionalization. Services included directly in the HCBOW are assisted living, medical day care and senior centers. Unfortunately, the program is capped at 7,500 participants which has resulted in an extensive waiting list. The individuals on the waiting list are forced to choose between going without services or entering a long-term care facility. The only way to bypass the waiting list is to enter institutionalized care first.

HB 80 offers a solution to end the stagnation and increase the ability of individuals to live in the community. The bill requires the state to remove the cap, to create a plan to increase waiver participation, and to send applications to individuals on the waitlist.

For the reasons listed above, Catholic Charities of Baltimore appreciates your consideration, and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for HB 80.

Submitted By: Regan Vaughan, Director of Advocacy