



March 7, 2022

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair  
House Health and Government Operations Committee  
House Office Building, Room 241  
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairwoman Pendergrass:

The Maryland Commission on Caregiving is pleased to submit this **letter of information for HB1020 “Developmental Disabilities Administration – Self-Directed Services (Self-Direction Act of 2022).”** This piece of legislation seeks to make changes to the Community Pathways Waiver administered by the Developmental Disabilities Administration by increasing opportunities and improving access for participants to self-direct their own services.

Serving as “the voice of the Maryland caregiver,” the Maryland Commission on Caregiving (MCC) is a Governor-appointed body composed of caregivers, community-based organizations supporting caregivers, and representatives from the Departments of Health, Disabilities, Human Services and Aging. MCC is charged with recommending policies that positively impact family caregivers, soliciting and responding to their concerns and acknowledging their contributions. Family caregivers provide the majority of care and financial support for their loved ones who are unable to care for themselves due to an illness, injury or disability.

HB1020 reflects suggested policy changes that were developed as a result of six months of strategic discussions among many disability, state agency, and legislative stakeholders who served on the Maryland Self-Direction Program Workgroup, which includes a member from MCC. Some of the proposed changes include increasing access to Support Brokerage Services, improved training for Coordinators of Community Services, inclusion of goods and services that would be allowable under the waiver, and identifying circumstances in which a family member can serve as paid staff.

The concept of self-direction is important to the family and informal caregiving community as it allows for greater flexibility of supports and is well known to lead to positive health outcomes, improved quality of services, and increased quality of life. Access to consumer-directed services has become increasingly more important as a result of the pandemic when many family caregivers were allowed to be compensated for providing care to their loved ones. This need is intensified given the crisis of the direct support workforce shortage.



The Maryland Commission on Caregiving works to ensure that caregivers across the lifespan are equipped with the resources needed to provide safe care to their loved ones across the state of Maryland. Self-Direction is an integral part of that.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Eastman, Chair  
Maryland Commission on Caregiving