



**DATE:** February 28, 2023      **COMMITTEE:** House Health and Government Operations  
**BILL NO:** House Bill 596  
**BILL TITLE:** Health and Human Services Transportation Improvement Act of 2023  
**POSITION:** Support with amendment

**Kennedy Krieger Institute supports with amendment House Bill 596 - Health and Human Services Transportation Improvement Act of 2023.**

**Bill Summary:**

House Bill 596 establishes the Rural Nonemergency Medical Transportation Program for hospitals to coordinate transportation to or from medical services for eligible individuals. The legislation also establishes the State Coordinating Committee for Health and Human Services Transportation to examine the needs of state residents who require transportation to access job, medical or other health-related appointments, senior citizen programs, etc.

**Background:**

Kennedy Krieger Institute provides specialized services to patients and students nationally and internationally. Kennedy Krieger Institute is dedicated to improving the lives of children and young adults with developmental, behavioral, cognitive and physical challenges. Kennedy Krieger's services include inpatient, outpatient, school-based and community-based programs.

The Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities (MCDD) at Kennedy Krieger Institute is proud to be Maryland's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (UCEDD) and a member of the national Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD).

MCDD links the community to vital services, research and information to improve the lives of people with disabilities. Our mission is to provide leadership that advances the inclusion of people with intellectual, developmental and other disabilities through preservice preparation and training; research and evaluation; community service and technical assistance; and information dissemination.

**Rationale:**

Increasing access to reliable and equitable transportation for individuals with disabilities will have a profound impact on access important healthcare services. Currently, the paratransit service in Maryland has much need for improvements and leaves many individuals stranded or waiting hours for the service.

Having reliable transportation will increase access to specialized healthcare programs like the ones offered at Kennedy Krieger.

Anecdotally, Kennedy Krieger has had many patients from rural jurisdictions that have had immense challenges in getting to their appointments at the Institute, which located primarily in Baltimore City. For example, a child and their guardian from the Eastern Shore were able to ask a fellow church member for transportation to the Bay Bridge, but non-emergency transportation was not available to pick them up at a meeting point to take them from the Bay Bridge to Baltimore City.

**Amendment:**

On page 3, line 16 under section 13-4801(E)(II)(2) add the word “accessible” – “Provides **accessible** transportation services to eligible individuals...” By adding the word accessible, the legislation is clarified that transportation must be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant so that all individuals may access the service without barriers.

**Kennedy Krieger Institute requests a favorable report with amendment on House Bill 596.**

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