



TO: The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Bonnie Cullison

FROM: Danna L. Kauffman
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DATE: March 1, 2024

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 1176 – *Home- and Community-Based Services Waiver – Eligibility*

On behalf of the Maryland Association of Adult Day Services and the Maryland-National Capital Homecare Association, we submit this joint letter of **support** for House Bill 1176, which alters the financial eligibility criteria for the home- and community-based services waiver submitted by the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to include certain categorically needy individuals and a certain community spouse resource allowance. The bill also requires MDH to adopt regulations to establish a timeline within which the Department is required to approve or deny the application of an applicant.

This bill will expand eligibility for seniors and the disabled population to allow them to receive services in their home or other home- and community-based settings, which is most often the preferred setting. Too often, we see individuals denied services who are barely over the threshold but cannot afford private pay rates. Given increasing costs and the fact that the threshold has not been changed in decades, this bill will address a critical need.

Equally important is the need for the State to establish a timeline for approving or denying an application. Not only are delays affecting an individual from receiving needed care, but delays are having a profound effect on operations. For prospective waiver clients, providers will often hold a bed for that individual. By holding the bed, the provider is foregoing payment from another source. In addition, centers and agencies are not receiving the needed referrals, due to the delays, which effects census and revenue. Centers and agencies must be financially viable to continue to provide services under the Medicaid program. For these reasons, we urge a favorable vote.