



Intellectual and Developmental Disability Commission- March Meeting Minutes

Date: March 21, 2024

Time: 4:25pm-7pm

Location: **Zoom**

Guest Speaker(s): Dr. Patrice McGhee

- The commission is considering switching from an all-Zoom format to a combination of Zoom and in-person meetings, with in-person meetings potentially occurring every three or four months starting after the summer in September.
- Dr. Patrice McGhee, Chief of Aging and Disabilities, provided an overview of the Aging and Disability Services division, including its mission, divisions, programs, and boards and commissions.
- The Commission on Aging is required by the Older Americans Act and advocates for safety net services and programs for older adults in the community, while the Commission on Veterans Affairs provides advice on programs and services related to veterans.
- Montgomery County established the Developmental Disability Supplement in 1974, and the CEO's proposed budget includes a 3% increase to the supplement for fiscal year 25, increasing it to \$630,
- The FY 25 budget increases the supplement for Aging and Disability Services by \$631,000, bringing the total budget to over \$21 million, divided among 41 service providers in Montgomery County.
- The department is working on improving data collection and data points for programs and services, as well as changing contract language to include metrics for quality reporting from contractors.
- Dr. McGee discussed the need for data-driven metrics and benchmarks to measure the impact of programs for individuals with IDD emphasizing the importance of accountability and outcomes.
- There was a suggestion to explore the possibility of having a separate entity or additional focus within the aging and disabilities services to specifically address the needs of individuals with IDD, considering the large population in Montgomery County that falls under this category.
- The ad hoc subcommittee on education presented a motion to oppose MCPS's plans to eliminate the autism Learning Center and reduce the use of para-educators for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- The public, including parents of students with autism, expressed concerns about the impact of the proposed changes on the education and support of their children.
- Concerns raised about the proposed elimination of the autism learning education center and cuts to the IDD education system, including para educators.
- Parents and community members express strong opposition to the closure of the autism centers and reduction of para educators, citing the importance of these programs for students with special needs.
- The motion to oppose the elimination of the autism Educational Learning Center and to oppose the Drastic cuts was passed unanimously. The group encouraged parents and the public to share their thoughts and personal stories to be included in letters and public testimony.

- Senate Bill 790 involves the eligibility program for individuals with disabilities and low income, aiming to address the issue of people losing Medicaid and community support when they reach the age of
- The Senate hearing is discussing Amendments, including age cap and marriage penalty, and the legislation may not pass this session due to the late start and crossover process.
- The DD supplement is being increased by 4.5% due to the cost of business and serving more people, with a request for an additional 1.5% increase. The supplement goes directly to DSP wages and is important for retaining talent and improving quality metrics.
- The commission discussed the need for a full-time FTE support person for the IDD commission, with the consensus that it is essential for the commission to effectively carry out its work.
- There was a suggestion to create a master calendar for social events and activities for individuals with IDD, with the idea of coordinating and making events available across different providers and agencies. This idea was well-received and will be further developed by the community engagement ad hoc group.
- Request for a full-time liaison position to support the efforts of the newly created commission was unanimously approved as a priority for the FY 25 budget.
- Discussion on creating a partnership or forum between businesses and organizations to identify employment opportunities and best practices for individuals with IDD.

Action Items

- Provide input on the timing and schedule for the combined format meetings.
- Circulate and get input about the timing of the meetings and the schedule.
- Work with the group to plan and schedule the alternating format meetings.
- Improve recognition of raised hands during meetings
- Provide an overview of each program within Aging and Disability Services if the group is interested.
- Request information on the proposed budget for the DD supplement for fiscal year 25
- Collaborate with the county to expand the disability employment training services and contracting program.
- Explore opportunities for meaningful social engagement for persons with IDD potentially through the Community Life Engagement group or comprehensive resource list development.
- Present the sensory friendly initiative next month.
- Consider reaching out to Kulture City for potential collaboration on sensory friendly initiatives.
- Provide information on the AP110 program for the ad hoc committee on employment.
- Follow up with Steve on metrics and benchmarks for the supplement.
- Speak on the issue and make a motion to oppose MCPS's plans.
- Provide public testimony at upcoming public hearings in April.
- Review and vote on the letter supporting changes to Senate Bill 790.
- Further develop the idea of a master calendar for socializing and coordinating events for individuals with IDD
- Consider adding special movies and other events to the calendar.
- Explore the possibility of hosting the calendar on the county's website.
- Reach out to Kim and the rest of the county to gather more information about existing programs for employment opportunities and placement for people with IDD.
- Gather organizations that support employment and discuss the idea of creating a partnership or ongoing forum for exchanging best practices.
- Consider reaching out to businesses in other states that have similar initiatives for people with disabilities to understand how they support gainful employment.

- Discuss and funnel ideas to relevant groups for further consideration.

Meeting Adjournment: Meeting summary was discussed followed by an adjournment.

Meeting Minute Key Content from Chat

There were 0 External Interruptions or compromises of meeting integrity. All chat was deemed to be appropriate in content. There was no significant use of the chat feature for troubleshooting technical issues (i.e., poor audio, unmuted microphones). There was no use of chat for discussion of substantive issues. Overall almost no use of Chat during the meeting.

VOTING MEMBERS C = Conference Call / C* = Alternate Attended / P = Present / A = Absence W = Waived Absences by County Executive / R = Waiver Requested	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	September	October	Absences
	1. Patrick Callahan	P	P	P	W	P	P					
2. Jillian Copeland	P	P	P	W	P	P						
3. Tracy Craig	A	P	P	W	P	P						
4. Jake Didinsky	P	P	P	W	P	P						
5. Jamie Doyle	P	P	P	W	P	P						
6. David Ervin	P	A	P	W	P	P						
7. Natori Green	P	P	P	W	P	P						
8. Michael Greenberg	P	P	P	W	P	P						
9. Lori Mitchell-Keller	A	P	P	W	P	P						
10. Lisa Lorraine	P	P	P	W	P	P						
11. Jenn Lynn	P	P	P	W	P	P						
12. Stephen Riley	P	P	P	W	P	P						
13. Eric Salzano	P	P	P	W	P	P						

14. Carmen Smith	P	P	P	W	P	P							
15. Yvonne Vanlowe	P	P	P	W	P	P							
16.) Najla Wortham	P	P	A	W	P	P							
17.) John Whittle	P	P	P	W	P	P							
18.) Carmen Zahra	P	P	P	W	P	P							
19.) Smil Soria	W	W	W	W	P	P							
Attendance Policy: A Voting Member may miss up to 3 meetings within a one year rolling period. Voting Members who miss more than 3 meetings in that period or who miss 3 consecutive meetings will be automatically removed. Waivers may be requested for absences caused by extenuating circumstances.													
Non-Voting Ex-Officio Members													
1. Onesta Duke- Maryland Department of Health.	P	P	P	W	P	P							
2. Justin Hack- WorkSource Montgomery	P	P	P	W	A	P							
3. Dorne Hill- Department of Health and Human Services	P	P	P	W	P	A							
4. Karla Nabors- Montgomery College	P	P	P	W	P	P							
5. Sharon Norcio- Montgomery County Recreation	P	P	P	W	P	P							
6. Margie Parrott- Montgomery County Public Schools	W	P	P	W	P	P							

County Members Present: Kim Mayo

Members of the Public: Silvia H, Sarah, Uche O, Jamie H, Meaghan P, Ji Youn, Fini, Julie, Eugene K, Ramani K, Gloria G, Lekan A.

Ad Hocs

PRIORITIES

Special Education & Activities

Funding streams & supports for education
Creating a roadmap for families & IDD
Equity, access and advocacy during school years

Hospitalization & Dual Diagnosis

Improving ED visit
Discharge coordination
Dual diagnosis & crisis

Promoting Quality Services

Identifying unmet needs
Looking at gaps in services and funding

IDD Workforce Stability

Building a reliable , high quality 21st Century workforce through strategic investment, training and professional development, and career development

DD Legislation & Policy

Bill 33-23
MDH/Medicaid Eligibility Issues
SB 790

Community Engagement

Employment

Housing

Commissioner Input Needed
What are your thoughts on priorities



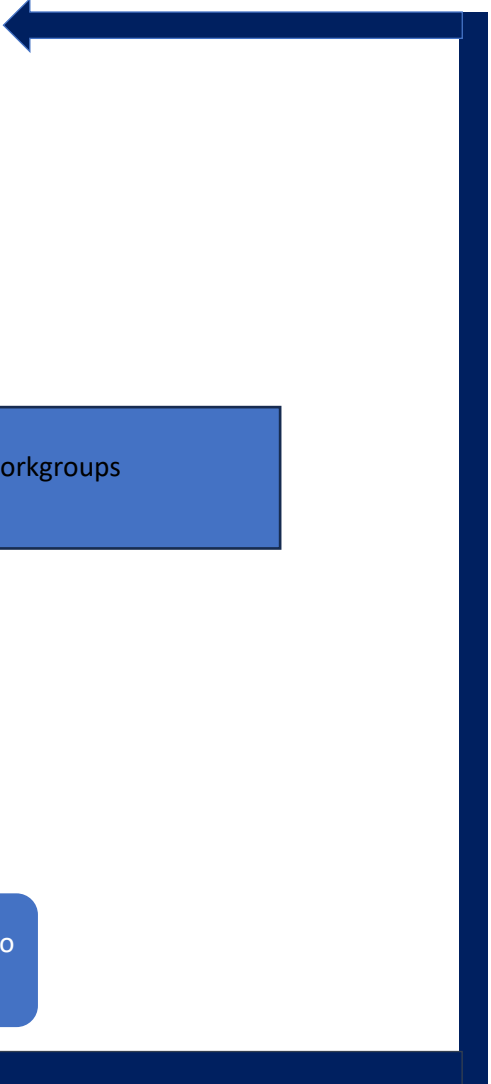
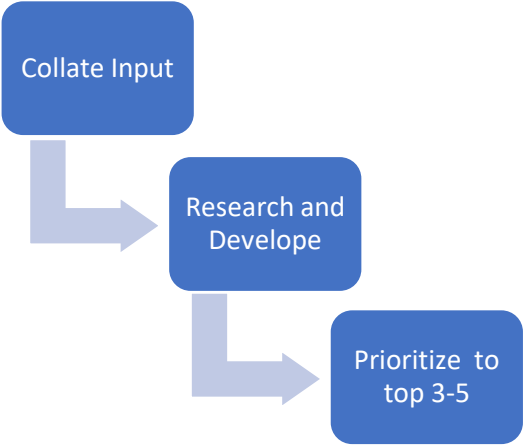
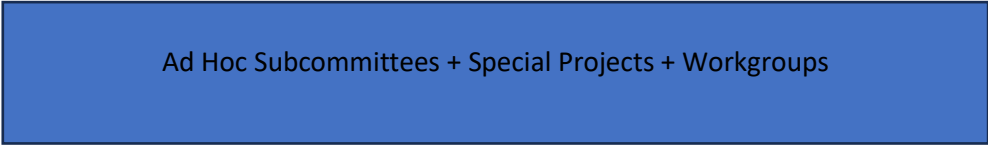
DEFINING PRIORITIES & GOALS

IDD Commission

County Support Staff

Liaisons (0.5 FTE)

25 Commissioners

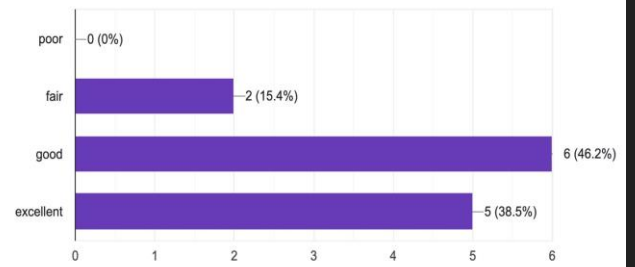


IDDC Meeting

Meeting #5- February

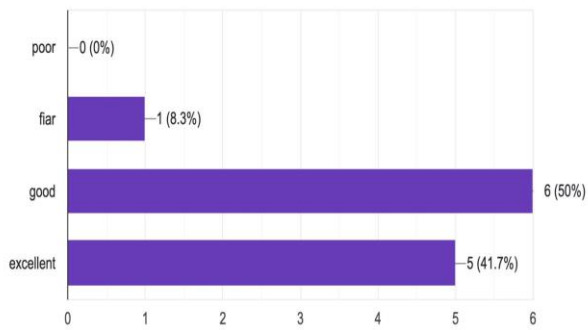
How would you rate the overall quality of yesterday's meeting?

13 responses



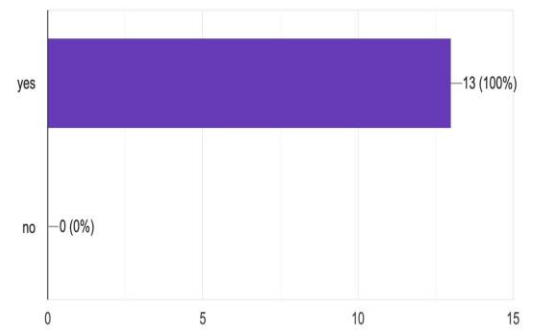
How would you rate the quality, informational contents, and usefulness of the invited speaker(s)

12 responses



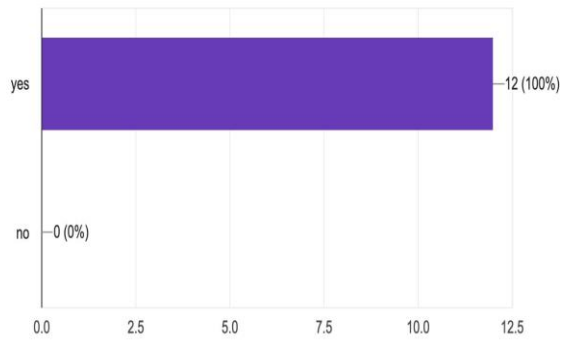
Did you feel the meeting was conducted in a respectful, professional and inclusive manner?

13 responses



Did you feel you had ample opportunity to provide input?

12 responses



Suggestions By Commissioners February 2021

✓ Sharing of Documents

Subcommittees

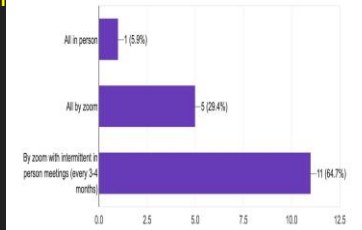
✓ Clarification on timeline

workflow for defining

✓ Explore alternative

Preferred meeting format.

17 responses





INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COMMISSION

February 27, 2024

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., Secretary of Health Maryland Department
of Health
Herbert R. O'Connor State Office Building
201 West Preston Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Dear Dr. Herrera Scott:

I am writing on behalf of the Montgomery County Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Commission to highlight systemic issues we have identified in the Maryland Department of Health's Eligibility Redetermination Process and offer recommendations to address them. These issues require immediate action as they are significantly impacting individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities in Montgomery County and across Maryland, particularly their access to uninterrupted essential services, including but not limited to routine and emergency medical care, including prescription drugs, long-term services and supports, and transportation.

We believe that collaborative efforts between the Medicaid Eligibility Determination Division, the Developmental Disabilities Administration, and the Coordinators of Community Services are essential to expedite immediate actions to resolve these issues and improve outcomes for Marylanders with disabilities. Outlined below are recommended immediate next steps that we believe will help mitigate the risks to Home and Community Based Services and medical assistance eligibility challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in accessing necessary services:

1. Provide DDA-certified Provider Agencies with a List of Redetermination Dates:

- Furnish agencies (including Coordinators of Community Services) with a comprehensive list of redetermination dates for all individuals supported. Medicaid eligibility dates showing in LTSS*Maryland* are not consistently accurate and cannot be relied upon by provider agencies willing to facilitate the redetermination process. This listing of current and verified redetermination dates will facilitate accurate information and enable providers to collaborate with

Coordinators of Community Services (CCS) agencies on the submission of

Department of Health and Human Services

401 Hungerford Drive • Rockville, Maryland 20850 • 240-777-3000 • FAX 240-777-1494 • TTY Maryland Relay 711
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/hhs

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., Secretary of Health

February 27, 2024

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redetermination packets, thereby reducing waiver ineligibility and the risk of individuals losing healthcare and long-term services and supports.

2. Pause the Redetermination Process:

- Temporarily pause the redetermination process until such time as current challenges to the system are resolved. This will ensure all individuals remain eligible for healthcare and long-term services and supports until a comprehensive resolution is determined.

3. Extend Appeals Process Timeline:

- Extend the appeals process timeline from 10 to 60 days to accommodate people with IDD, their provider agencies, and family members who may not receive timely notification of redeterminations. This extension will enable them to submit appeals within a reasonable timeframe and, critically, will allow the Medicaid Eligibility Determination Division to catch up with processing a growing number of redetermination submissions, thereby increasing the likelihood of maintaining the individual's waiver eligibility without service interruption.

4. Continue Retroactive Payment Position:

- Maintain the retroactive payment position to demonstrate a commitment to providers by ensuring reimbursement for services rendered. This will encourage providers to continue delivering services and support to individuals, ensuring uninterrupted access to necessary resources.

In addition to these immediate actions, we propose the following future action steps:

1. Ensure Accuracy of LTSS*Maryland* Information:

- Verify the accuracy of redetermination information in LTSS*Maryland* to prevent inaccuracies and discrepancies.
- Provide agencies with the ability to access the redetermination applications in LTSS*Maryland*. This enhancement will allow providers to collaborate with CCS agencies in accurately submitting documentation and/or facilitate the retrieval of information from family members or caregivers.

2. Establish a Process for Updating Authorized Representatives:

- Implement a process within CCS agencies to inform the authorized representative when there are changes in staff within CCS agencies.

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., Secretary of Health

February 27, 2024

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3. Build Capacity Within EDD for Timely Processing:

- Enhance capacity within MDH's Eligibility Determination Department to ensure timely processing of redetermination packets and increase responsiveness as stakeholders work to troubleshoot issues.

In the immediate term, we believe these steps are essential to assuring no interruption or losses of services for Marylanders with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. We further believe that by implementing these proposed next steps and fostering collaboration between agencies and stakeholders, we can address the systemic issues in the Eligibility Redetermination Process and improve outcomes for individuals with disabilities in Maryland.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to your response and to working together toward positive change.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Greenberg

Michael D. Greenberg, M.D., Chair
Montgomery County
Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities Commission

cc: Marlana R. Hutchinson, Deputy Secretary DDA
Ryan Moran, Deputy Secretary Health Care Financing & Medicaid Director



Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

March 13, 2024

Michael D. Greenberg, MD, Chair
Department of Health and Human Services
Montgomery County Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Commission
101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Chair Michael Greenberg:

Thank you for the letter outlining concerns with the state's eligibility redetermination process. Please be assured that the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) is actively working to ensure that every single person who remains eligible for coverage remains enrolled.

During the Public Health Emergency (PHE), individuals who participate in the Medicaid waiver programs that are operated by the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) - Community Pathways, Community Supports, and Family Supports - did not have to go through a Medicaid redetermination to keep their Medicaid eligibility, home and community-based services (HCBS), or waiver eligibility. During this time, even if a participant was no longer financially, technically, or medically eligible, they did not lose coverage or services.

Beginning in April 2023, Maryland began making Medicaid eligibility reviews again during the unwinding of the COVID-19 PHE. This process of Medicaid eligibility redetermination, or renewals, happens over time. This means that not everyone, since the onset of this unwinding process, has been up for renewal at the same time.

A majority of participants enrolled in the DDA-operated Medicaid waiver programs, such as those receiving Social Security Income (SSI), do not follow the same renewal process as other Medicaid participants. In Maryland, SSI individuals automatically qualify for Medicaid and do not have to fill out an application form. For those that do require a redetermination, notices were mailed to Medicaid participants, regardless of program participation, starting 75 days from the date of their scheduled redetermination. Participants receive multiple notices to remind them of their redetermination process. Each outlines appeal rights within, in accordance with the requirements as set forth by the Maryland Medicaid Administration and the Office of Administrative Hearings.

Chair Michael Greenberg

March 13, 2024

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Over this past weekend, MDH's LTSS*Maryland* system was updated to reflect accurate due dates. This automation will ensure that accurate due dates are consistently reflected across the state's enrollment systems. DDA service providers can also view the financial redetermination due date for individuals they support in LTSS*Maryland's* Provider Portal.

Regarding your concerns about individuals who may have been negatively impacted by Medicaid's waiver redetermination process, please provide us with any specific cases that you are aware of, or can share. We are sensitive to these issues and want an opportunity to research them further. Please share these cases via a secured format and direct them to DDA's eligibility liaison, Ama Owusu-Donkor at ama.owusu-donkor@maryland.gov.

Thank you again for your letter. We appreciate your advocacy, and we welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your fellow commission members to discuss this matter further. Please contact Monique Cheatham at (443)-681-8517 or monique.cheatham1@maryland.gov to coordinate our schedules at a time that is convenient for you.

Sincerely,



Laura Herrera Scott, MD, MPH
Secretary of Health



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor • Aruno Miller, Lt. Governor • Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

Dear Waiver Participant:

This letter is to let you know the steps you need to take to renew your Medicaid coverage. When you renew, we will see if you are still eligible for Medicaid and for the waiver program you are in. To renew your Medicaid, known as renewal or redetermination, is to reapply. Some also call it an eligibility review.

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) did not require you to renew your Medicaid during the COVID-19 public health emergency from March 2020 until now. Everyone kept their coverage during this time - even if they were no longer eligible. Now everyone must renew when it is their turn.

Get Ready to Renew

1. Make Sure Your Contact Information is Up to Date.

- Make sure we have your right address, phone number and email so we can reach you. To check and update your information: o Log in to your [MyMDThink](#) account, or o Contact your [Local Department of Social Services](#) for help, or o Work with your Coordinator of Community Services (CCS) for help.

2. Check Your Mail. Read Your Mail.

- o Watch your mail for notices from us. You will get notices about your upcoming renewal 90 days ahead of time.
- Look for your renewal packet in your mail.
- o Your Coordinator of Community Services can help you with information about your renewal date too.

3. Complete and Return all Forms and Documents Right Away.

- When you get your renewal packet, be sure to complete and return it by the due date. If you do not, you will lose your Medicaid and waiver coverage.

4. Help with Your Renewal e Call your Coordinator of Community Services or your personat representative, which is the person you choose to help you, for questions or help with your renewal.

Translation Services | Servicios de Traducción

Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame a su Coordinador de Servicios Comunitarios o a su Departamento de Servicios Humanos local.

Visit our Participant Check-In webpage to learn more about renewals. Go to the page now: <https://bit.ly/3sHXQN1> or scan the QR code.



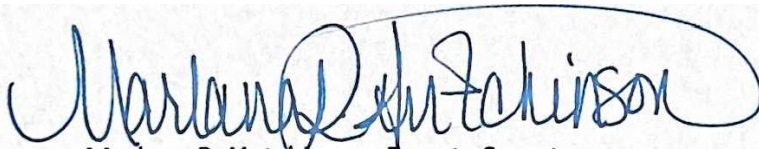
Best,



Ryan B. Moran, Deputy Secretary

Moran, Deputy Secretary

Health Care Financing and Medicaid



Marlana R. Hutchinson, Deputy Secretary

Marlana R. Hutchinson, Deputy Secretary

Developmental Disabilities Administration

Best,

Ryan

Letter from Parent (Identifying details withheld for privacy)

Good morning,

I'm _____, a Montgomery County resident. I am writing today as one of many concerned parents with students of the Darnestown Autism Elementary Learning Center (ELC). My son, _____ is a _____ grade student and has diagnoses of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). He has been a student at the Darnestown Autism ELC since _____ grade. We have been very pleased with the evidence-based learning with instruction tailored to children with ASD. His current classroom has the staffing and resources he needs to pursue a high school diploma.

I am writing to you to express my deep concerns regarding the recent decision to convert the Darnestown Autism ELC from its specialized focus on students with ASD to a traditional learning center. I and many other parents were taken aback by this unexpected announcement and we are perplexed as to why Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) believes altering the Darnestown Autism ELC program is in the best interest of the children it serves. The other parents and I implore the decision makers and those tasked with oversight of the school system to reconsider this decision. We also encourage revision of the processes governing programmatic alterations that will enable greater transparency and accountability to the parents, students, and taxpayers served by MCPS.

The conversion of the Darnestown Autism ELC to a traditional learning center comes with a significant reduction in staff and a marked increase in the scope of the program's responsibilities. Leadership within the Darnestown Autism ELC informed parents that the school would lose seven full-time equivalent paraeducator positions because of the conversion; yet the school would be open to a broader array of special-needs students despite the loss of staff. Currently, the Darnestown Autism ELC is the only learning center in MCPS focused specifically on students with ASD and it delivers instruction and services uniquely tailored to those students' learning profiles.

The other parents and I are very concerned about the compliance implications of transitioning these students to a new learning environment. Accordingly, we kindly request more details in writing about the factors underlying MCPS' decision to shutter the autism specific focus of the Darnestown Autism ELC including but not limited to academic, operational, budgetary, and policy considerations. We would like to please receive details of the analysis MCPS staff conducted prior to its decision to ensure that students presently enrolled in the Darnestown Autism ELC will continue to receive the services outlined in their Individualized Education Programs (IEP) with fidelity.

While the other parents and I acknowledge that some students with ASD attend traditional learning centers, we reject the premise that the Darnestown Autism ELC and traditional learning centers are functionally equivalent. In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act's requirements for public schools to provide a free appropriate public education, MCPS placed students at the Darnestown Autism ELC instead of traditional learning centers because it was the least restrictive learning environment for those children. Accordingly, many Darnestown students have IEPs that rely upon the availability of higher paraeducator ratios, specialized staff, and ASD-specific supports.

The other parents and I are dismayed by the lack of transparency in the lead-up to the decision to discontinue the autism specific focus of the Darnestown Autism ELC. MCPS central office staff misled the public when it made representations in both the FY 2025 Special Education Staffing Plan and a February 22, 2024 joint MCPS and xMinds "Primers on Placements" presentation that the Darnestown Autism ELC would remain an option for students with ASD in FY 2025.

We are disappointed that a decision of this magnitude is being made so late in the budget process without the benefit of public input. As we observe Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, we seek for MCPS to recommit to Governor Moore's determination to "leave no one behind." Therefore, we respectfully ask that you work with MCPS to reconsider these changes and collaborate with the community to find solutions that prioritize the well-being and educational success of all students at the Darnestown Autism ELC.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent and time sensitive need.

Sincerely,

Current issue: The Montgomery County Board of Education plans to phase out, and eventually eliminate, the Autism Learning Center at Darnestown Elementary School (DES) and to reduce paraeducator support for students grandfathered into the program by 50% effective this fall (current ratio is 1 teacher: 2 paras: up to 9 students). The DES learning center will be converted to a traditional learning center. This is a time sensitive issue as the budget will be finalized in May.

Background¹: The autism learning center at Darnestown is the only diploma-bound elementary school program that was designed, in consultation with the Kennedy Krieger Institute, to meet the needs children with autism who can follow the MCPS curriculum, but require:

- Structured ongoing systematic behavioral interventions during transitions, as well as large and small group instruction and independent work
 - A high degree of reinforcement for compliance and escape behaviors
 - Structured teaching for transitions, following routines, and attention to task.
- Children in this program often exhibit challenging behaviors that limit their ability to be placed in general education or a traditional learning center due to the structure of the traditional LC program. A traditional LC serves children with a variety of learning, behavioral needs, and diagnoses and with an average enrollment of 15 students per class with 1 paraeducator. A traditional learning center will not be able to meet the needs of children whose profiles align with the DES autism learning center.

Why the IDDC should be concerned:

- The prevalence of autism is increasing each year and currently 1 in 36 children have a diagnosis of autism, which is an increase of about 92% from 2012. These trends are consistent with statistics published in Montgomery County on children with autism enrolled in Special Education. From 2012 to 2022, the number of students with autism enrolled in MCPS increased by 61.4 percent, from 1,889 to 3,049 students.²
- Persistent increases in the enrollment of autistic children in the County each year remain. Moreover, due to COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020, which did not permit children to undergo formal diagnostic testing for autism, any projections of enrollment of children with autism in future fiscal years that MCPS has conducted to support decisions are likely severe underestimates.
- Collectively, these data suggest an unmet need to EXPAND autism-specific programs rather than phase them out. If the Board eliminates the DES autism learning center, there will be countless children with the same educational and behavioral support needs those currently enrolled in the program coming up behind them with no proper placement that comports with their legal rights to FAPE. The cuts to the MCPS budget are affecting the most vulnerable kids in the County.

¹ <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/siteassets/district/departments/special-education/events/diploma-track-elementary-revised-5.14.pdf>

² <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CPWD/CPWD2023AnnualReport.pdf>;
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CPWD/CPWD2014AnnualReport.pdf>

DRAFT

To: Members of the Senate Finance Committee

To: Members of the Montgomery County State Delegation

From: Montgomery County Intellectual and Developmental Disability Commission

RE: Senate 790, Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Employed Individuals with Disabilities.

Position: Support with Recommendations

The Montgomery County Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Commission (IDDC) under local Enabling Legislation consists of people with developmental disabilities, family members, service providers, and advocacy organizations. Prescribed duties include advocating at the state level to advance the needs of people with IDD.

SB790 is vital to the state and county public policy to promote the employment of people with disabilities. Significant state and local resources are allocated every year to support people to become employed, which then puts the employed person at risk of losing their Medicaid health insurance as well as Medicaid home and community-based supports (HCBS), based on Medicaid income test requirements. The EID provides an effective way to achieve what people with disabilities need, namely, employment, health insurance, and community-based services. Indeed, the Maryland Department of Health, Developmental Disabilities Administration has established Maryland as an Employment First state for people with disabilities.

SB790 removes the age cap so that people 65 years and older are eligible for EID eligibility, and reduces the premiums paid to enroll in the program by ending the marriage penalty.

The EID program is under-utilized, complicated, and not well known across the state. Access and the application process is challenging and long. More initiatives for public awareness, application assistance, public and equity outreach are essential to meet the policy goals of employment first for people with disabilities

Therefore, the IDDC recommends:

1. Establish provisions of robust public awareness and public outreach in keeping with the State Employment First mission as well as equity.
2. That local and state agencies have EID trained staff to assist people to understand and apply for the EID program
3. That the EID State-Based Coalition of disability advocates includes an appropriate number of people with disabilities.

Thank you for your consideration. The Montgomery County Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Commission strongly supports SB790 and request the Maryland General Assembly Elected Officials vote in favor of the Bill.

Sincerely;

Michael Greenberg

Chair

IDDC