

**Baltimore County Commission on Disabilities
November 16, 2022, Virtual Meeting via Webex
Minutes**

Attending: Ben Dubin, Mike Bullis, Shakima Davey, Jay Doyle, Ben Dubin, Kathleen Durkin, Julie Gaynor, David Greenberg, Monica Lijewski, Terri Parrish, Jose Sanchez, Doug Smith, Michael Tan

Commission Chair Terri Parrish noted that Doug Smith has been appointed to chair the Maryland Alliance of Disability Commissions.

Terri noted that Maryland was the first state to establish the cabinet level Department of Disabilities led by a Secretary.

Doug Smith introduced the meeting's guest speaker, Christian Miele, deputy secretary of the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDD). Mr. Miele led a discussion of the Maryland Disabilities Plan, which was released in July of 2021.

Mr. Miele emphasized that the development of the plan involved outreach to and engagement with a diverse group of agency partners and stakeholders. MDD always welcomes feedback and comments on the plan.

The plan is available here:

<https://mdod.maryland.gov/pub/Pages/Publication-Home.aspx>

MDD focuses on policy domains, not categories of disability, and serves as a consultant to state agencies and other constituencies.

Key policy areas include:

- Transportation
- Employment
- Emergency Preparedness
- Community Living
- Health and Behavioral Health

Mr. Miele discussed the overall purpose of the plan and its guiding principles as indicated below.

STATE DISABILITIES PLAN

OVERVIEW

The Maryland State Disabilities Plan 2020-2023 has two (2) documents:

1. State Disabilities Plan

The State Disabilities Plan provides for the coordination of the State services and policies that ensure compliance with State and federal civil rights laws that provide:

- community-based supports
- housing
- transportation
- employment
- education
- financial stability
- health care
- family and peer supports
- recreational and wellness activities
- crime control, public safety, and correctional services
- accessible and universally designed communication and technology
- disability equity, transparency, and efficiency in state government services
- capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in response to and recovery from public health emergencies

2. Appendix

The Appendix provides background information for the State Disabilities Plan.

The State Disabilities Plan provides a framework which allows all levels of government and all sectors of the community to coordinate efforts to improve the lives of Marylanders with disabilities, their families, and caregivers. The plan is developed in collaboration with state agencies, community members, and other stakeholders.

LEGAL AUTHORITY

Human Services Article §7-132 outlines the requirements for the State Disabilities Plan, which is reported on annually in the Department of Disabilities Annual Progress Analysis.

Guiding Principles

Self-Direction *Individuals with disabilities will determine how they wish to live.* People with disabilities will have the ability to participate in the design of their personal support systems, and the opportunity to live and participate fully in the community in non-congregant settings.

Financial Well-Being *Individuals with disabilities will have equal opportunity to improve their financial well-being.* People with disabilities will achieve financial well-being through equal access to education, employment, work incentives and benefits counseling, financial management, and savings programs.

Health and Wellness *Individuals with disabilities will have access to resources and services that promote health and wellness.* People with disabilities will improve their quality of life through multidisciplinary and integrative services and supports.

Maximizing Resources *Maryland state agencies and key stakeholders will maximize resources effectively.* Maryland state agencies and key stakeholders will refine processes and infrastructure.

Accessible Communication

Maryland state agencies will be accessible, and communicate information effectively, equitably, and in an accessible format. People with disabilities will have equal access to all state agency communications, programs, and services.

MDD gathers information and evaluates outcomes and objectives associated with the above principles.

Mr. Miele mentioned the MDD recently hired an information technology specialist to examine and improve a wide array of communication services to foster more accessibility.

MDD has also recently stepped up its engagement and advocacy to support accessible playgrounds.

Mr. Miele discussed the outcomes listed in the plan:

STATE DISABILITIES PLAN

OUTCOMES

The outcomes listed below are detailed descriptions of progress that must be made within Maryland's state agencies in order to achieve and reach our measurable goals. These thirteen outcomes directly impact the five main guiding principles—or long-term changes—that are listed above in this plan. These outcomes play an integral role in each of the principles in the following ways:

Outcome One: Improved self-directed supports and services for people with disabilities and their families

Outcome Two: Improved availability of integrated, affordable, and accessible housing options for people with disabilities and their households

Outcome Three: Improved reliable transportation options for people with disabilities

Outcome Four: Improved employment and training options, including self-employment and non-congregant competitive opportunities available in an integrated environment in which there are individuals with and without disabilities

Outcome Five: Improved educational support services for children, youth, and life-long learners with disabilities

Outcome Six: Improved financial stability and independence for people with disabilities and their families

Outcome Seven: Improved physical and behavioral health care for people with disabilities and their families

Outcome Eight: Improved family and peer support services for people with disabilities and their families
Outcome Nine: Improved crime control, public safety, and correctional services emphasizing the needs and rights of people with disabilities

Outcome Ten: Improved accessible and universally designed communication and technology

Outcome Eleven: Improved disability equity, transparency, and efficiency in state government services
Outcome Twelve: Improved access to recreational and wellness activities for people with disabilities and their families

Outcome Thirteen: Improved capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in response to and recovery from public health emergencies

Q&A with Mr. Miele:

Ben Dubin asked if local Commissions are informed/consulted when work on an accessible playground is undertaken. Mr. Miele indicated the state would encourage this type of communication.

Julie Gaynor noted that people with disabilities need an accessible path/route to reach accessible playgrounds.

The state will create a map showing the locations of accessible playgrounds.

Given that a new governor will be assuming office, Mr. Miele discussed the transition plan MDD created to foster a smooth transition.

Staff liaison Jay Doyle reported on the status of the video production for the Commission Awards program. Filming of 15 interview segments is complete and the video is now being assembled and will go through editing. The video will be aired early in December.

Mr. Doyle thanked Doug Smith for his fundraising efforts, and offered thanks to the following organizations that contributed to the video production:

- The Arc Baltimore
- Chimes
- Keypoint Health
- The League for People with Disabilities

Julie Gaynor suggested that the Commission consider sending correspondence to Baltimore County Public Schools to ask about special education positions that are vacant or have experienced vacancies/turnover.