

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

Attending: Mike Bullis, David Bycoff, Shakima Davey, Carla DeMendonca, Jay Doyle, Ben Dubin, Kathleen Durkin, Julie Gaynor, Larry Hughes, Romelle Goodman, David Greenberg, Terry Hickey, Brad Kressman, Monica Lijewski, Greg Miller, Terri Parrish, Jose Sanchez, Doug Smith, Michael Tan

Commission chair Terri Parrish led the meeting.

Ms. Parrish discussed the need to review/update information in the comprehensive Resource Guide published by the county Department of Aging.

Mary Manzoni has departed county government and is now executive director of Maryland Works. Mary has expressed interest in establishing a gubernatorial forum on disability issues.

Terry Hickey, Director of Baltimore County Department of Housing and Community Development, offered updates on DHCD initiatives and activities. The department has hired a Deputy Director, Ashley Johnson-Hare, who formerly worked for Enterprise Community Partners; brings 15 years of experience in fair and affordable housing; previously worked for the Maryland Department of Disabilities overseeing affordable, accessible housing development.

Bureau Veritas has scheduled site visits.

Modular Units:

DHCD expects to receive a proposal soon for the development of modular, accessible housing units that meet the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS). The accessibility features of these developments/units would be established up front in the beginning of architectural design. The modular, accessible homes initiative would involve new development; prior efforts to rehabilitate existing housing stock to create accessible units did not implement all of the accessibility features associated with federal accessibility standards.

An assessment of vacant land, land that can be used for the modular developments and affordable housing in general is underway.

Reserved Parking, Housing Modification Funds:

DHCD has engaged technical assistance in its effort to study, clarify and map the process by which residents apply for financial assistance to support modifications to residential dwellings (owner-occupied and rental) that enhance accessibility. This financial assistance is accessed through different programs, all of which are now within DHCD.

With regard to rented units, complications can arise because it is the landlord, not the tenant, who must ultimately undertake the modification. DHCD wishes to implement improved case management practices and better understand factors that can slow/impede the process. DHCD has engaged with the Image Center during this process. DHDC presently believes that the housing modification funds, including the Conciliation Housing Accessibility Modification Program (CHAMP, renters only) and the Housing Accessibility Modification Program (HAMP, renters and homeowners) can be used to fund exterior improvements and thus support the establishment of an accessible parking space within a residential property.

Ben Dubin commented on the process by which individuals with disabilities apply for reserved parking spaces on the public street. Mr. Dubin suggested that early in the process, before it potentially reaches the Board of Appeals, applicants be advised that the modification funds may be able to foster establishment of a parking space within the residential property and thus eliminate the need for a reserved, public street parking.

Bills of Interest, 2022 Session of the Maryland General Assembly

David Greenberg, Kathleen Durkin and Mike Bullis collaborated in identifying and discussing legislation under consideration in Annapolis that could be of interest to the Commission. The following items were discussed:

HB529 / SB559 - Estates and Trusts – Supported Decision Making

FOR the purpose of authorizing the use of supported decision making to assist an adult through the provision of support for the adult in making, communicating, or effectuating decisions and preventing the need for the appointment of certain substitute decision makers for the adult; authorizing an adult to enter into a supported decision-making agreement with one or more supporters under certain circumstances; providing immunity from civil or criminal liability under certain circumstances; and generally relating to supported decision making for adults.

HB 323 Real Property – Limitations on Summoning Law Enforcement or Emergency Services – Prohibition

Prohibits the eviction of tenants for utilizing emergency public services, such as law enforcement, fire department, and emergency medical services; and prohibits local jurisdictions from passing ordinances that penalize owners and tenants of housing who utilize emergency public services.

HB 293 / SB0241 - Behavioral Health Crisis Response Services—9-8-8 Trust Fund

Establishing the 9-8-8 Trust Fund as a special, non-lapsing fund to provide reimbursement for costs associated with designating and maintaining 9-8-8 as the universal telephone number for a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline; requiring the Maryland Department of Health to designate 9-8-8 as the primary phone number for the State's behavioral health crisis hotline; requiring the Department by December 1 each year to report on the expenditure of funds and additional services provided by the funding; etc.

SB0299/HB0136 - Education - Public and Nonpublic Schools - Seizure Action Plans (Brynleigh's Act) Co- Sponsor Senator Washington

This legislation requires schools to develop Seizure Action Plans for students with seizure disorders and identify and train at least two school personnel on the identification, response, and treatment of seizures. With approximately 7,900 children living with epilepsy in Maryland, education, information, and training on seizure recognition would ensure school personnel are prepared to recognize and respond appropriately and efficiently to a student experiencing a seizure. Parents, as critical partners in education, would be actively involved in collaboration with school personnel to create a seizure action plan for their students with a seizure condition. (Similar laws have already been passed in 12 states, including Virginia and New Jersey. It is time this law was passed in Maryland.)

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HB0226/SB0577 - Public Schools- Self-Contained Special Education Classroom - Use of Video Recording

Devices Sponsors include Delegate Guyton, and Senators Klausmeier and Kelly

This bill requires each county board of education, beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, to install a video recording device in each self-contained special education classroom; provide for the installation, operation, notification, and use of a video recording device and the viewing, use, and confidentiality of system recordings; requires the school administration to notify the appropriate law enforcement agency on receipt of a complaint of alleged neglect or abuse of a student under certain circumstances; etc.

HB 8 / SB275 - Labor and Employment - Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program - Establishment (Time to Care Act of 2022) Co-sponsors include Senator Hayes

This legislation established the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program in the Maryland Department of Labor. It would require paid family leave of 12-24 weeks. Would require 50-50 split between the employee and employer of .75% of the employee's weekly wages. Expands qualifying conditions (for example, expands definition of family member, adds kinship care, and next of kin) beyond what is currently covered under FMLA. Includes people who self-direct. Employee becomes eligible after **680 hours of cumulative hours worked in MD**. Contributions begin 1/1/22 and claims may begin 7/1/23. Leave can run concurrently with FMLA. Weekly benefit amount for first year of claims shall be between \$50- \$1000. Max weekly benefit amount will increase by increase in CPI.

HB 496/no cross file: Labor and Employment - Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program - Establishment

Minor changes to above include application to only employers with 15 or more employees. Would require 50-50 split between the employee and employer of 1% of the employee's weekly wages. Although employers with fewer than 15 employees do not have to pay into the fund, employees must still contribute their share.

SB0357/HB0589 - Adult Protective Services - Vulnerable Adults Registry - Investigations and Records of Abuse and Neglect and Workgroup Study Co-sponsors include Senators Klausmeier and Sydnor

This bill establishes certain requirements and procedures relating to the reporting, disclosure, investigation, and appeal of civil allegations and findings of abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults. It also authorizes the Social Services Administration to establish and maintain a centralized confidential database for abused and neglected vulnerable adults; establishing a Workgroup to Study Best Practices for a Vulnerable Adult Registry in Maryland.

HB 16/no cross file 1 - Criminal Law - Exploitation of Vulnerable Adult or Elderly Individual - Undue Influence

Alters the definition of “undue influence” in the criminal code with regard to the prohibition against exploitation of a vulnerable adult/elderly person within the context of property transfers. Details the circumstances the court may consider in determining whether a defendant exerted “undue influence.”

HB 466 / SB 235 - Income Tax - Personal Exemption - Disabled Individuals

Expands the Maryland personal tax exemption of \$1000 to a person with a permanent physical disability.