

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1434
Health

(Delegate McCaskill)

Maryland Department of Health - Caregiver Resource Webpage - Establishment

This bill requires the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to develop and maintain a centralized caregiver resource webpage for caregivers in the State. The webpage must be posted in a conspicuous location on the MDH website and provide plain-language, easily accessible information to support all types of caregivers at different stages of caregiving. In developing the webpage, MDH must coordinate with the State Department of Education; the Maryland Department of Aging (MDOA); the Developmental Disabilities Administration; and any other relevant State or local agencies. MDH must review and update the webpage as necessary, but not less than annually. The bill may not be construed to require MDH, any State or local agency, or any other person described, listed, or linked to on the webpage to provide or fund a specific service, device, resources, or program described, listed, or linked to on the webpage.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill’s requirements can be handled with existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: The bill does not directly affect local governmental operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary: “Caregiver” means an individual who provides care, supervision, or assistance to another individual due to the individual’s age, disability, chronic illness, cognitive impairment, or other functional limitation. “Caregiver” includes (1) a parent or

guardian of a child with a disability, chronic illness, cognitive impairment, or other functional limitation; (2) an individual caring for an adult family member or loved one with a disability, chronic illness, cognitive impairment, or other functional limitation; and (3) a minor or dependent providing care to a parent, grandparent, or other adult due to the age, disability, chronic illness, cognitive impairment, or other functional limitation of the parent, grandparent, or other adult. “Caregiver” does *not* include a parent or guardian providing care, supervision, or assistance to a child that does not have a disability, chronic illness, cognitive impairment, or other functional limitation.

The webpage must include information and links to resources related to:

- caregiving for (1) children with disabilities and special health care needs; (2) adults with disabilities, chronic illness, or behavioral health needs; and (3) older adults;
- caregiver health, wellness, and respite resources;
- State and local programs that may provide financial assistance, training, or support to caregivers;
- safety planning; and
- privacy, data minimization, and data security considerations when technology is used to support caregiving or safety.

Current Law:

Health and Human Services Referral System

The Health and Human Services Referral System is a telephone service that automatically connects an individual dialing the digits 2-1-1 to an established information and referral answering point. MDH oversees the 2-1-1 Maryland call centers and operation of the Health and Human Services Referral System in the State. MDH, in consultation with 2-1-1 Maryland, (1) maintains public information available from State agencies, programs, and departments that provide health and human services; (2) supports projects and activities that further 2-1-1 Maryland development; (3) examines and make recommendations to maximize the use of information technology in making 2-1-1 services available throughout the State; (4) evaluates the performance of each call center; (5) makes recommendations to 2-1-1 Maryland regarding the quality of service provided or the performance of call centers; and (6) makes recommendations regarding corrective action to be taken by a call center.

2-1-1 Maryland is a private, nonprofit organization that maintains an information and referral service network that is available to Maryland residents via telephone and Internet. 2-1-1 Maryland offers guidance 24 hours a day and seven days a week regarding access to health, crisis, and social services.

Maryland Access Point

MDOA coordinates, evaluates, and plans the delivery of services for, and advocates on behalf of, older adults at all levels of government. The department also administers programs and activities under the provisions of the federal Older Americans Act. Most of the direct services funded by MDOA are delivered through area agencies on aging (AAAs).

Federal law defines an “Aging and Disability Resource Center” as an entity, network, or consortium established by a state as a part of the state system of long-term care, to provide a coordinated and integrated system for older individuals and individuals with disabilities (and their caregivers) that provides, in collaboration with AAAs, centers for independent living and other aging or disability entities. Maryland’s Aging and Disability Resource Center is Maryland Access Point (MAP). The purpose of the program is to provide a coordinated system of information and access for individuals seeking long-term services and supports, including in-home, community-based, and institutional services. MAP must, using its available resources, provide:

- options counseling;
- assistance concerning aging and disability issues and long-term services and supports planning;
- written materials regarding the availability of program services;
- a public database that can be accessed and searched on the Internet, of resources and services that could be useful to individuals who may need long-term services and supports and their caregivers, as well as those involved in long-term services and supports; and
- other related services necessary for the program’s success.

MDOA must administer, supervise, and coordinate MAP with the cooperation of the Department of Disabilities, the Department of Human Services (DHS), the Governor’s Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and MDH. Local MAP offices must be designated throughout the State to ensure easy access to the program.

Maryland Commission on Caregiving

The Maryland Commission on Caregiving, staffed by DHS, coordinates statewide planning, development, and implementation of family caregiver support services. The commission must:

- solicit and gather concerns of caregivers by conducting surveys, holding public hearings, establishing a telephone hotline for public access, and other appropriate means;

- develop and distribute to interested parties a handbook of current respite care and other family caregiver services available in the State;
- review successful respite care programs in other states;
- develop a model family caregiver support program that incorporates best practices from existing programs in this and other states;
- provide ongoing analysis of best practices in family caregiver support programs in this and other states;
- coordinate activities of existing and proposed family caregiver support services among State and local units;
- research available funding sources and explore possibilities for additional funds;
- identify unmet needs and priorities for additional funds; and
- monitor implementation of the commission's recommendations.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Association of County Health Officers; Maryland Department of Aging; Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Department of Health; Department of Human Services; Department of Legislative Services

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jg/jc

Analysis by: Amberly E. Holcomb

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510