



February 26, 2025

The Honorable Emily Shetty  
Chair, Health and Social Services Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee  
350 Taylor House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Shetty:

We write to you today in opposition to proposed budget cuts to the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) for Fiscal Year 2026. These funding decreases would significantly and devastatingly reduce resources for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and the community providers who support them. The Governor's proposed cuts to DDA constitute a 22% overall reduction in the DDA budget in FY26. As county leaders, we understand the difficulty in making budgetary decisions when faced with significant budget shortfalls.

Of particular concern for our counties, however, is the elimination of the geographical differential in the reimbursement rate for IDD service providers. The governor's budget request eliminates the long-standing geographical differential for IDD providers in five counties, for a total reduction of \$112M in FY26. The rate differential was created by DDA as an acknowledgment of the higher cost of living and doing business in five counties in central Maryland: Montgomery, Prince George's, Frederick, Calvert, and Charles. Providers in these counties made critical wage increases for their staff and operational decisions based on the geographical differential that was approved year after year in the State budget. Even with the geographical differential, however, providers struggle to compete for staff; if the differential is eliminated and providers are forced to offer reduced wages to their employees, there could be a serious shortage in services available to individuals with IDD in the affected counties. Moreover, the reasons for the establishment of the geographical differential remain unchanged and there has been no study done by DDA to assess the impact of its elimination on providers.

The Honorable Emily Shetty  
February 26, 2025  
Page Two

Maryland's developmental disabilities system has made meaningful progress toward inclusivity, independence, and improved quality of life for individuals with disabilities. While we are encouraged to hear of the reconsideration of reductions to the FY25 budget that were previously requested, the FY26 proposed cuts dismantle that progress, forcing vulnerable individuals and families into crisis and driving up long-term costs as more people struggle to maintain their lives safely in the community. As budget discussions move forward, it is our hope that a consensus is reached that does not put our most vulnerable residents at risk. Maryland must stand firm in its commitment to supporting individuals with IDD and the providers who make their independence and dignity possible.

Regards,



Marc Elrich  
Montgomery County Executive

Jolene Ivey  
Chair, Prince George's County Council

Kate Stewart  
President, Montgomery County Council

Jessica Fitzwater  
Frederick County Executive



Earl F. Hance  
President, Calvert County Board of County Commissioner