

November 1, 2024

The Honorable Wes Moore
Governor of Maryland
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: FY2026 Operating Budget Request

Dear Governor Moore:

On behalf of Service Coordination, Inc. (SCI) we are writing to thank the Moore administration for continued support for Marylanders with disabilities, older adults and their families. As the FY2026 budget is developed, we request that the administration prioritize funding for disability and aging communities and associated workforce support, including increasing rates for home and community-based providers.

SCI is an award-winning nonprofit, providing case management services and advocacy for more than 16,000 people of all ages with disabilities, medically complex needs, and older adults across Maryland, the District of Columbia, and Northern Virginia. SCI helps people navigate complex systems by championing choice, fostering community, and nurturing connections. SCI also provides aging life care management services through Montcordia. SCI is the largest case management agency in Maryland, and we employ over 1000 team members, many of whom are Coordinators of Community Services (CCS) and Supports Planners, providing critical case management services for people enrolled in various Medicaid Waiver and State Plan programs.

SCI case managers play an essential role in enhancing the quality of services and supports for people navigating complex healthcare and social service systems. SCI has a customer satisfaction rating of 94.8, placing us in the 84th percentile when benchmarked against other organizations. We provide personalized support tailored to each person's unique needs, preferences, and goals, resulting in person-centered plans that address multiple life domains for people across the lifespan with 94% reporting that their plan contains what is important to them. By facilitating communication and coordination among various community service providers, our case managers ensure that care is integrated and holistic, which helps people access a wide range of resources with 93% reporting that their case manager works with them and their team to reach their goals and outcomes. We advocate alongside the people we serve and their families to foster choices, community and connection.

We respectfully ask that your FY2026 Budget includes:

1. Implementation of full funding of rates for home and community-based providers and cost of living adjustments.

Adequate rates for home and community-based providers are essential to ensuring that The Maryland Department of Health and community service providers can continue to provide vital supports that enable people to live and work in their communities.

Current services for individuals with disabilities are severely underfunded. A 2021 rates study indicated that there are significant gaps in funding for intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) community-based services and supports. At a minimum, a cost-of-living rate increase should be adopted to ensure that existing services are not further decimated by inflationary costs that impact services. **SCI strongly supports the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Coalition’s recommendation of a statewide 3.5% inflationary increase for the FY2026 budget.**

2. Continue funding critical services provided by The Maryland Department of Health, Home and Community Based Services programs.

- Over 18,000 Marylanders with intellectual and developmental disabilities rely on services through the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) Medicaid waivers. An additional 3,500 people are on the waiting list for DDA services and over 4,000 are on the DDA “future request” list. The state should strive to serve all individuals who need these essential services and without long delays. SCI is currently the largest case management agency in Maryland and provides Community Coordination case management services to over 10,000 people enrolled in DDA Waiver programs and provides Waiting List case management services to an additional 2,000 people on the DDA waiting list.
- Additionally, more than 14,000 Marylanders with disabilities, complex medical needs and older adults rely on services through the Office of Long-Term Services and Support (OLTSS) Medicaid waiver and State Plan programs. SCI provides Supports Planning case management to over 4,000 of the people enrolled in these programs. Notably, there are over 24,000 people on the Home and Community-Based Options Waiver Registry waiting for services. The Maryland Department of Health has identified disparities in Latino, Black and Brown communities having access to services and supports. **We also request additional investments be made to break down cultural and language barriers and promote information, education and access to underserved or unserved communities.**

3. Reduce waiting lists for waiver programs and restore funding.

In 2022, the *End the Wait* legislation was enacted to assist thousands of Marylanders awaiting services, requiring sufficient funding in the annual budget. However, waiting lists remain high. The plan and its funding are vital for those in need. **We request restoration of the \$10 million of funds previously removed from the budget for provision of services for those on the waiting list.**

4. Fund a full year of service for all eligible Transitioning Youth.

SCI supports over 300 Transitioning Youth (TY) and their families. Transitioning Youth is a term used for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are preparing to leave school and are exploring community-based services that help them, and their families, navigate a path towards a good life as adults. The Governor’s Transitioning Youth Initiative earmarks funds in the DDA budget for eligible students exiting from school. In support of Maryland joining the national movement and becoming an Employment First State, this funding is critical to help youth explore community based integrated employment options. These services provide exploration, training, and support to be fully participating members of their communities, to include earning a wage and engaging in work that is compatible with their vision of a good life. Further, there are significant delays in processing TY

individuals, many do not start services until many months after graduation or even to the end of their first post-graduation year. Maryland Department of Health rules require TY individuals to be placed by the end of their first post-graduate year to be eligible for TY funding. We request your consideration in extending the eligibility period and associated funding by an additional 6-12 months given these systemic delays and the needs of transitioning youth

SCI also endorses the recommendations made by the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Coalition in their letter to Governor Moore dated October 7th.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. If you have any questions or would like to learn more about SCI and the services that we provide, please contact Sarah Butts, Vice President of Government Relations, at sbutts@sc-inc.org or 240-741-2273.

Sincerely,



John Dumas, USMC (Ret) MBA
President and CEO

cc: The Honorable Laura Herrera Scott, Secretary, MDH
The Honorable Carol Beatty, Secretary, MDOD
The Honorable Helene Grady, Secretary, DBM
The Honorable Marlana Hutchinson, Deputy Secretary for Developmental Disabilities, MDH
Eric Luedtke, Chief Legislative Officer