



**Testimony:  
Chauna Brocht  
Director of Supportive Services  
Health Care for the Homeless**

Before the

**Maryland House of Delegates: Appropriations Committee**

on

**SUPPORT for  
HB 1615: Human Services – Temporary Disability Assistance Program**

February 27, 2018  
House Office Building, Room 120  
Annapolis, Maryland

Thank you, Madame Chair and members of the committee. My name is Chauna Brocht. I am the Director of Supportive Services at Health Care for the Homeless, and I am here to urge your support for HB 1615 and an increase in the vital benefit we know as TDAP.

We at Health Care for the Homeless strongly support HB 1615, a bill that would bring the amount of the Temporary Disability Assistance Program (TDAP) benefit in line with Maryland's Temporary Cash Assistance benefit for a family of 1 by 2022, in addition to specified procedural adjustments in the administration of TDAP.

In last year's General Assembly, a number of Health Care for the Homeless clients shared personal statements about what a modest increase in the benefit would mean for them. The monthly TDAP loan helps recipients meet basic human needs, in particular housing and shelter, for at least a portion of each month.

According to a survey of 777 TDAP recipients that Health Care for the Homeless conducted in 2009:

- Nearly two-thirds of recipients reported using some or all of their monthly stipends for housing or shelter. Although TDAP—which is currently \$185/mo.—by itself is rarely enough to completely cover the cost of housing, many TDAP recipients use emergency shelters or stay with family and friends
- Roughly 44% of individuals surveyed spent some of their monthly benefit on food
- Another 43% of those surveyed said they use TDAP to access hygiene items such as soap, shampoo and shaving supplies

TDAP recipients have not seen an increase in the benefit in more than 15 years. Although the Appropriations Committee did a great deal of work in the fiscal 2018 budget to restrict funds to support a \$10 per month increase to the TDAP benefit, the average monthly payment to recipients has not yet increased for recipients. Health Care for the Homeless is pleased to see the benefit increase written in the language of the fiscal 2019 budget. (Department of Human Resources—Family Investment Administration 2018)

Once the \$10 increase to the monthly TDAP stipend goes into effect, TDAP recipients receiving \$195 per month are still receiving only 10% of the state's Minimum Living Level of \$1,900 in 2017, according to the Department of Human Resources 2016 report, *Estimated Minimum Living Levels for Temporary Cash Assistance Participants Updated through Fiscal Year 2017*. Perhaps more significantly, **the \$195 benefit will still be lower than it was back in 1995, when it was \$205 per month.**

The Temporary Disability Assistance Program is a vital emergency resource for 17,000 of Maryland's most vulnerable residents who are unable to work due to serious medical disabilities. TDAP provides a stipend of \$185 per month in support to two groups:

- individuals with short-term disabilities—those expected to recover and return to the workforce within 12 months
- individuals with long-term disabilities deemed unable to work who are in the process of applying for federal disability assistance

According to the 2016 DHR report, 8% of TDAP recipients are seeking support for short-term disabilities while 92% of recipients are seeking support for long-term disabilities. Most people on TDAP are waiting to receive SSI/SSDI and will eventually pay back the state for benefits received.

HB 1615 would incrementally increase TDAP to \$306 per month—the amount afforded Temporary Cash Assistance recipients for families of one. In 2020 the TDAP monthly stipend would increase to 75% of the TCA benefit; in 2021 it would increase to 85%; and in 2022 and beyond it would be \$306 per month.

Health Care for the Homeless respectfully urges the Committee to vote favorably on this bill.