

Maryland Disabilities Forum

Gubernatorial Candidates Forum

October 11, 2010

Additional Questions for the Candidates Submitted by Audience Members

1. Can you find a way to inform the public that disabled people should not be excluded from family celebrations?
2. How can we find accessible housing near metro stops for workers with disabilities?
3. Many states are suing the federal government to get out of “Obamacare”. Will you have Maryland join them? If not, why?
4. How would you create more accessible and affordable housing?
I would love to be a homeowner again but most are priced out of my income.
5. There will be many people trying to save state money in many ways. Some may be tempted to limit funding (with federal assistance) for our most vulnerable citizens. What will happen to funding for transitioning youth?
6. Re: The Community Support Act (CSA). CSA is part of the national health care bill- CSA has the potential to end the waiting list but states have to opt into it. Would you be willing to have our state opt in?
7. How do you propose to help to remove the financial

disincentives to employment for the disabled community?

8. Unemployment numbers among people with disabilities have not changed since the passage of the ADA in 1990. What proposals do you have to produce different results?
9. What is being done to make solar energy more affordable to disabled persons?
10. Will you preserve funding for mental health wellness and recovery centers run by consumers?
11. I would like to know if you will keep the Office for Deaf/Hard of Hearing instead of closing this agency.
12. Many Maryland agencies help the disabled financially, why are these programs so wasteful with the funds they manage? Also why is it so hard to find out about and enroll in them?
13. What are your plans to increase the effectiveness of inclusion in our public schools? How are we going to implement UDL, RTI and evidence based practices?
14. Many landlords and property managers are basically denying making the sidewalks in the apartment complex accessible for walkers, crutches, canes, wheelchairs, power-chairs and mobility scooters. How can the disabled community enforce the laws already in place or are new laws required?
15. Would you support better wages for community service provider workers?
16. I believe that DDA should audit services given to each individual, after all they fund individuals. Such audits need to be shared with family each and every year. Why are the audits not done that way? Are you in favor of an audit of each non-government organization?

17. Maryland citizens with developmental disabilities (such as cerebral palsy, autism and Down syndrome) need community supports to live dignified lives in their community. Although Maryland is the richest state in the nation, thousands wait for needed services. How would you propose to address this need if elected?
18. Maryland's community-based service delivery system supports nearly 20,000 people with developmental disabilities throughout the state. However, direct support staffs are paid low wages in comparison to other states and in comparison to other human services in Maryland. How would you ensure a strong community support system so people can live in the community instead of institutions?
19. The federal law provides the right to a free appropriate public education to all students with disabilities. The law requires that students be educated with their age-typical peers in local communities unless their team finds that supplementary supports and services cannot provide a quality education in the local school. Yet, Maryland ranks far behind other states in its inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities in their local schools. Clearly, this is a broad systems issue that needs to be addressed throughout teacher preparation and training, funding support to local schools, etc. If elected, what do you see as the issues to ensure that students with disabilities have their rights met in regard to quality education?
20. Health care reform will bring more individuals into the public behavioral health system, particularly those who are newly eligible for Medicaid. How will you ensure that the budgets for mental health and addictions are adequately resourced to meet this demand?
21. Community Services - For decades, Maryland has been a national leader in developing community-based services to replace costly and unnecessary institutional care. However,

institutional savings have not remained in the behavioral health system, community services have been historically underfunded, and individuals throughout Maryland lack consistent access to the array of community services that is needed to prevent emergency room utilization and other costly forms of care. What is your strategy to address this problem and ensure the full continuum of behavioral health services is available to those in need?

22. What are your behavioral health priorities for children and youth?
23. Co-occurring Needs - Maryland continues to operate a fractured system of care for children and adults who have multiple challenges, such as mental illness, substance abuse, trauma and/or developmental disability. What steps will you take to ensure an integrated approach and access to services across different systems and funding streams?
24. What is your plan to improve outcomes for youth and adults with mental illnesses and substance use disorders who are involved in the criminal justice system?
25. Housing is a critical issue for individuals and families struggling to recover and reintegrate into the community. What solutions do you propose to address the lack of affordable housing for individuals with disabilities? Do you support, and would you fund in the budget, more programs such as the innovative and successful Housing First program in Baltimore City?
26. Substance Abuse - How will your administration improve substance use disorder prevention, treatment, and recovery services?

27. Veterans - With BRAC implementation bringing thousands of new military families to Maryland, what are your plans to sustain Maryland's Commitment to Veterans or begin a new program to assist veterans and their families?
28. Workforce - What steps will you take to resolve a severe and worsening workforce crisis in public behavioral health, one that will likely become even more severe with the increased service demand health care reform will produce?
29. How would you address the institutionalization that occurs for people with adult onset disabilities? Would you pursue Medicaid changes to help people get out of nursing homes?
30. What is your view on inclusion in Maryland schools?
31. How would you address the needs of ALL people with disabilities, including the many who are not DD or MH?
32. How would you propose Maryland finds funding to support desperately needed community supports for people with disabilities, so that people are not on waiting lists with no end in sight?
33. How else would you make people aware about disability issues?
34. What can be done to assist persons awarded SSDI to obtain adequate health care coverage while they are in their two year waiting period before Medicare Part A&B become effective?
35. What are your views on stem cell research and funding?
36. How will you address inadequate transportation services for people with disabilities to get to work?

37. To former Governor Ehrlich: As a Republican, your support for embryonic stem cell research is tepid at best. At the same time, Gov. O'Malley has vigorously supported the growth of Maryland's biotech research community, which includes the exploration of embryonic as well as adult stem cell-based therapies. Given that stark difference between you, why should Marylanders with disabilities, who are hoping for better days ahead, choose to support you over Governor O'Malley
38. We have the Medicaid buy in. But what else would you do to help people with disabilities get medical benefits and keep them even if they go to work?
39. Maryland is the richest state in the country. Although we recognize the economic times in our state and country are facing, we also know states with less wealth are providing more fiscal support to people with developmental disabilities. Thousands of people are waiting for community services. What is your commitment to this population of Marylanders?
40. How would you enforce Mental Health and Substance Abuse Parity Law?
41. Dental care for children with Disability often requires a special setting; that is not covered by Dental Plans. Would you change that?
42. Would you support and pursue creation of a job placement fee to pay for direct job placement for people with disabilities?
43. How will you pay for the needed expansion of services for adults who have developmental disabilities?
44. What would you do to decrease real or perceived liability for employers who hire people with disabilities?

45. What are your plans to increase the effectiveness of inclusion in our public schools? How are we going to implement UDL, RTI, and evidence based practices?
46. Do you support the expansion of the Employment Works Program to place state contracts with non-profit service providers and consumer owned businesses? What would you do to expand those opportunities?
47. What can a disabled person do when their need/ accommodation is not addressed? (For example, Section 8 choice voucher- Disability program- requested an apartment with walk in shower; which affects my quality of living; I had to accept my current apartment to avoid losing my voucher.
48. Would you reduce regulations that don't allow alternative staffing among community service providers?
49. Why won't you support an increase to the Alcohol Tax?
50. Would you support a “disability slot section” at gambling parlors where proceeds will support disability wait list, etc?
51. Would you support stiffer penalties for crime against persons with disabilities?

October 14, 2010