

# BROWN ULMAN • 2014

## Improving the Lives of Marylanders with Disabilities

Over the last eight years we have made improving the lives of Marylanders with disabilities a top priority. Together, we: encouraged collaboration across agencies to create more affordable housing for people with disabilities; helped more people with disabilities to transition from institutions to community-based living; prohibited insurance companies from refusing coverage due to pre-existing conditions by implementing the Affordable Care Act; and funded the creation of a Center for Excellence in Non-Visual Access. In 2008, I also led the effort to establish Maryland's Commitment to Veterans, which has linked hundreds of Veterans and their families to behavioral health and supportive services.

Ken Ulman and I will build upon Maryland's successes by developing new opportunities for people with disabilities from the workplace to the community. Together, we will build a better Maryland for more Marylanders.

### Employment

We will continue Maryland's progress in becoming a model employer of people with disabilities by establishing a task force to report on State employment practices and surveying State employees to determine their unmet needs for accommodations.

Maryland will become an Employment First state for people with developmental disabilities by 2015, so that supported employment will be the first service considered for all people funded for a day program by the Developmental Disabilities Administration.

We will also explore options to ensure employees of sheltered workshops are paid fair and equitable wages.

### Community Living

We will support the expansion of community-based services that encourage independent living for people with disabilities through Maryland's Money Follows the Person grant. To date, nearly 2000 people have moved from institutions to homes of their own, and this progress will continue under our administration. Consistent with the *Olmstead* decision, we will continue to re-balance the Medicaid budget to eliminate the bias toward institutions.

### Mental Health

Together, we will make important investments to improve access to crisis response services in order to support families. Through early intervention, we will help more Marylanders live healthy and prosperous lives while remaining in the community and out of the criminal justice system.

# **BROWN ULMAN • 2014**

Maryland Coalition for the Civil Rights of People with Disabilities  
Page Two

We will continue to invest in the expansion of mental health first aid training, an effort in which Maryland is currently leading the way. We will also prioritize investment in school-based mental health services to ensure that Marylanders of all ages have access to these services.

## **Non-Visual Access**

We will position Maryland as a leader in ensuring full access to websites across the public and private sectors. We provided funding in our FY2015 budget to the National Federation of the Blind to establish a Center for Excellence in Non-Visual Access that will deliver training and technical assistance on web access.

## **Public Safety**

While we await the full recommendations of the Commission for Effective Community Inclusion of Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Maryland's Police and Correctional Training Commission will pilot a training curriculum to enhance officers' abilities to interact with Marylanders with disabilities in a manner that promotes communication, respect and positive outcomes.

## **Housing**

The Maryland Partnership for Affordable Housing (MPAH) has produced unprecedented rent subsidies for Marylanders with disabilities. MPAH has obtained housing choice vouchers and grants to create affordable rental units; and built a bridge subsidy program. We will continue our commitment to seek funding and to work with regional housing planning and development entities to create new homes for people with disabilities.

## **Education**

We will support equal access to a high quality Pre-K to college education for all Maryland students, including those with disabilities. We will work to ensure that learning materials and classrooms are integrated and accessible to all students. Further, we must provide the compensation required to attract and retain highly-qualified educators, therapists and sign language interpreters who are trained to support students with disabilities. We will also work with local boards of education to support training in behavioral management strategies that help all students.

# **BROWN ULMAN • 2014**

Maryland Coalition for the Civil Rights of People with Disabilities  
Page Three

## **Transportation**

We will appoint the Secretaries of the Departments of Transportation and Disabilities as co-chairs of the State Coordinating Committee for Human Services Transportation, and direct the Committee to: build coordinated systems that support access to employment and inter-jurisdictional travel; streamline application and certification processes; and enhance mobility management, including ride sharing.

## **Partnership**

Stakeholders in the disability community will have a seat at the table as we advance these and other important initiatives. We will work in partnership with advocates for people with disabilities as we build a better Maryland for more Marylanders.

For more information about our campaign, please visit [www.anthonybrown.com](http://www.anthonybrown.com).

Sincerely,



Anthony G. Brown