

Good [morning/afternoon/evening], County Council members. My name is Shelia Jenkins-Diaz, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today.

I am here to highlight a critical issue affecting individuals with disabilities and aging adults in Montgomery County. My family and I have lived in Takoma Park, Rockville, and Germantown for over 40 years, and I have personally experienced the challenges of navigating the county's support systems.

To fix this, we need:

1. Regular audits and updates to online and printed resources to prevent outdated information from circulating.
2. Cross-agency training so staff across all departments are equipped with the most up-to-date knowledge to assist caregivers and families, with clear and consistent guidance.
3. A centralized, user-friendly system that allows residents to access verified information.

When my mother suffered a stroke in 2017, my world changed overnight. Four years later, my brother had a stroke as well, and I found myself managing their care while balancing my own family responsibilities as wife and mother. What I expected to be a structured support system was instead a maze of outdated resources, broken links, and conflicting information. Calls and visits to county offices led me in circles, leaving me emotionally drained and exhausted and often in tears.

The Maryland OnePoint and HHS websites, meant to be comprehensive, are often convoluted and outdated. I will note, the HHS website was recently revamped; however, the website still lists outdated materials. Caregivers and families should not have to struggle to find accurate information to support their loved ones who rely on basic resources for vital support. Families seeking assistance should not have to fight through a broken system. Ensuring accurate resources and well-trained staff will empower caregivers, reduce barriers, and provide the support our community deserves.

I urge you to take action to improve information accessibility for those who need it most.

**Thank you for your time.**

