**Volunteers Needed to Serve on PAIMI Advisory Council**

Do you have an interest in issues facing persons with mental illness in Maryland?

Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) is seeking volunteers to serve on the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI) Advisory Council. DRM is Maryland’s designated Protection and Advocacy (P&A) agency working to create a more integrated and just society by advancing the rights of people with disabilities and ensuring equal opportunities to participate in community life.

In 1986, Congress authorized the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI) program as part of the PAIMI Act, which has since been expanded to provide protection and advocacy services to all individuals with significant mental illness, regardless of their place of residence. Under the PAIMI program, P&A’s are authorized to investigate abuse and neglect in all public and private facilities and community settings, including hospitals, nursing facilities and group homes, and to oversee the effectiveness of state agencies that license and regulate these programs.

Pursuant to the PAIMI Act, DRM has established a PAIMI Advisory Council for the purpose of providing independent advice and recommendations to DRM, and to work jointly with DRM’s Board in the development of policies and priorities to be carried out in protecting and advocating the rights of individuals diagnosed with a mental illness in Maryland.

The PAIMI Council meets 4-6 times per year to:

* Adopt priorities for the PAIMI program;
* Provide oversight and make recommendations to Staff, Board/ Board Committees regarding PAIMI services;
* Make recommendations regarding PAIMI priorities and policies;
* Review PAIMI expenditures and annual budget; and
* Review grievances from PAIMI eligible clients and potential clients.

The PAIMI Advisory Council consists of individuals who have received or are receiving mental health services and family members of such individuals; attorneys, mental health professionals, individuals from the public who are knowledgeable about psychiatric disability and have demonstrated a substantial commitment to improving mental health services, and a provider of mental health services.

DRM is seeking new council members with a strong commitment to improving the lives of individuals with mental illness to advise DRM on policies and priorities to be carried out in furtherance of the PAIMI program, for the purpose of protecting and advocating for individuals with mental illness.

For those interested in serving on the PAIMI Advisory Council, please visit [www.disabilityrightsmd.org](http://www.disabilityrightsmd.org), click on <https://disabilityrightsmd.org/paimi-advisory-council-2/> to learn more about the PAIMI Council, and <https://disabilityrightsmd.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/PAIMI-COUNCIL-APPLICATION.pdf>

to access and submit the application.

For questions or concerns, please contact Brianna Kitchelt, [BriannaK@DisabilityRightsMD.org](mailto:BriannaK@DisabilityRightsMD.org) or call 410-727-6352.