



Wes Moore | Governor

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For immediate release

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Maryland Department of Aging Receives National Environmental Award for Durable Medical Equipment Re-Use Program

BALTIMORE, MD — The Maryland Department of Aging announced on Earth Day winning The Reusies® 2024 Community of the Year Award for its Durable Medical Equipment Re-Use program. Maryland's program was one of three from across the nation chosen by Upstream to recognize innovative work that normalizes reuse and transitions from a throw-away economy to a regenerative and waste-free world.

"In addition to the environmental benefits of the program, we are especially proud to provide needed resources to a multigenerational population, ultimately contributing to longer-lived societies and healthier outcomes for so many Marylanders, a primary mission of the Department of Aging," said Maryland Department of Aging Secretary Carmel Roques.

Maryland Durable Medical Equipment Re-Use Director Ian Edwards noted that more than 8,000 pieces of medical equipment have been provided to date for free to Marylanders in need regardless of age, income level, or disability.

"The average wheelchair or walker has a usable life span of more than five years, but is often only used for a few months before being thrown away, taking up valuable landfill space while leaving many without resources to obtain the medical equipment they desperately need," said Edwards. "Since the program began three years ago, we have collected more than 33,000 donations, weighing over 850,000 pounds and saving over 345,000 square feet of valuable landfill space."

Upstream, a U.S.-based nonprofit promoting the reuse movement in the U.S. and Canada, received award applications from more than 100 innovative startups, environmental activists, and community leaders. This year's Community of the Year recipients were chosen by a panel of experts and influential voices across the plastic pollution and climate movements.

"Now in its fourth year, The Reusies® has grown to be more than just an awards show – it's a platform to highlight solutions, an inspirational spark to encourage innovation and collaboration, and a resource to help the reuse movement grow," said Upstream Chief Executive Officer Crystal Dreisbach. "I'm thrilled to see this year's group of reuse communities, activists, and businesses leading the way with their transformative, innovative, and impactful work to make reuse the norm."

Maryland Durable Medical Equipment Re-Use collects medical equipment at 8 landfill sites and several other partner locations across the state. All equipment is sanitized, repaired, and stored for future distribution, while non-functional equipment is broken down for parts to be used later, further minimizing waste.



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The Reusies® will be presented live at GreenBiz's Circularity 24 in Chicago on May 23. To learn more about Upstream, visit UpstreamSolutions.Org.

To learn more about Maryland Durable Medical Equipment Re-Use and how to donate or receive medical equipment, visit DME.Maryland.Gov.

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