



*MDDCSAM is the Maryland state chapter of the American Society of Addiction Medicine whose members are physicians and other health providers who treat people with substance use disorders.*

SB 638 - Maryland Insurance Commissioner - Specialty Mental Health Services and Payment of Claims – Enforcement

Senate Finance Committee

February 24, 2021

**SUPPORT**

In July 2019, Optum Maryland, as the lowest bidder, was awarded Maryland’s Administrative Service Organization (ASO) contract for the state’s public behavioral health system. The system failed immediately when operations commenced in January 2020. Fundamental systems problems continue to the present with no end in sight.

Behavioral health providers across Maryland have been put under tremendous strain, spending countless unreimbursed hours of staff time to reconcile old claims, review reams of data, attempt to communicate with the ASO, and suffer from cash flow crises. At this point there is no expectation that the problems will ever be resolved by pursuing the current path.

The prospect of actual enforcement is needed in order for the ASO needs to make the necessary investment in making providers whole.

Ultimately it is the citizens of Maryland with mental and substance use challenges who suffer the consequences of the failure to enforce the ASO contract.

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