



February 22, 2021

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support with Amendments – HB 919: Maryland Insurance Commissioner – Specialty Mental Health Services and Payment of Claims – Enforcement

Dear Chairman Pendergrass and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) and the Washington Psychiatric Society (WPS) are state medical organizations whose physician members specialize in diagnosing, treating, and preventing mental illnesses, including substance use disorders. Formed more than sixty-five years ago to support the needs of psychiatrists and their patients, both organizations work to ensure available, accessible, and comprehensive quality mental health resources for all Maryland citizens; and strives through public education to dispel the stigma and discrimination of those suffering from a mental illness. As the district branches of the American Psychiatric Association covering the state of Maryland, MPS and WPS represent over 1000 psychiatrists and physicians currently in psychiatric training.

MPS and WPS support House Bill 638: Maryland Insurance Commissioner – Specialty Mental Health Services and Payment of Claims – Enforcement (HB 919) as it would require enforcement of the insurance law that requires prompt payment of claims to be paid by insurers to all mental health providers caring for Medicaid patients under the 1115 Health Choice waiver. Maintaining the viability of mental health services to Maryland's economically disadvantaged population is particularly important during the added stress of a pandemic. Mental health centers, and clinicians who provide care to Medicaid patients, are the backbone of Maryland's public mental health system.

MPS and WPS asks the committee for a favorable report of HB 919. If you have any questions with regard to this testimony, please feel free to contact Thomas Tompsett Jr. at tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com.

Respectfully submitted,
The Maryland Psychiatric Society and the Washington Psychiatric Society
Joint Legislative Action Committee