



## **Maryland Addictions Directors Council**

**House Health & Government Operations Committee  
House Appropriations Health & Human Resources Subcommittee  
November 1, 2022**

Maryland Addictions Directors Council (MADC) represents outpatient and residential substance use disorder (SUD) and dual recovery treatment across the State of Maryland. Our members provide over 1,200 residential treatment beds throughout the state. MADC strongly supports accountability for Optum. Mental health and addiction treatment providers have struggled over the last three years to manage the Optum failure to launch and then endless other problems with the Optum system. MADC providers are at the forefront of the opioid overdose epidemic as well as managing the COVID pandemic during this same period.

In January 2020, Optum launched as the State vendor responsible for paying claims for publicly funded behavioral health services. Optum's system could not launch, leaving providers with no means to bill and receive payment from the public behavioral healthcare system. This forced the State to step in with estimated payments while giving Optum more time to deliver a working system.

In March 2020, the Covid pandemic hit Maryland causing disruption across behavioral healthcare. The opioid overdose epidemic, the COVID pandemic, and Optum's poor performance resulted in behavioral health providers struggling with underpayments and incurring additional costs as Optum's technology continued to fail.

For almost 3 years Optum has been unable to accurately report on claims and payments resulting from the failure to launch in January 2020. Providers have been handed spreadsheets with tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of lines of claims from Optum's system that providers have had to sort through by hand. Many programs had to hire additional staff or reassign existing staff to this arduous task. This was due to the public behavioral health vendor for claims payment not



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functioning properly. The vendor recently has improved its functionality but the lingering problems still pose a burden to many MADC providers.

None of these issues existed with any of the previous ASO's, of which there had been several.

In closing, thank you for the opportunity to offer written testimony.

Sincerely,

*Craig Lippens*

Craig Lippens  
President, MADC