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**Health Insurance Carriers and Managed Care Organizations – Participation on
Provider Panels (HB 1108)****Health and Government Operations Committee Hearing****March 9, 2023****FAVORABLE**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **in support of HB 1108** to (1) alter the process by which health insurance carriers and managed care organizations determine participation by providers on provider panels and (2) require internal review systems to include grievances involving the rejection of a provider's application to participate on a provider panel. This testimony is submitted on behalf of the Legal Action Center, a law and policy organization that has worked for 50 years to fight discrimination, build health equity and restore opportunities for individuals with substance use disorders, arrest and conviction records, and HIV or AIDs. In Maryland, we convene the Maryland Parity Coalition and work with our partners to ensure non-discriminatory access to mental health (MH) and substance use disorder (SUD) services through enforcement of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (Parity Act).

The General Assembly has taken important steps to improve access to SUD and MH care in the face of the state's worst overdose epidemic and mental health crisis and the MIA is working to improve standards for monitoring compliance with network adequacy metrics for SUD and MH care. This bill would continue these critical efforts to improve access to in-network providers and ameliorate the workforce shortage and insufficient networks for SUD and MH providers. Currently, providers are often denied panel admission for unspecified or unsubstantiated reasons (including an assertion that sufficient SUD or MH providers have been credentialed) without meaningful opportunity to appeal the denial. HB 1108 will ensure that health plans cannot deny an applicant due to having a sufficient number of similarly qualified providers if the applicant agrees to the terms and conditions for participation. The bill will also require plans to issue a written notice with a detailed explanation of the reason for denying provider participation on a panel and the process for submitting a grievance. These standards will help ensure Marylanders have access to a greater number of in-network SUD and MH providers who can deliver essential care.

Thank you for considering our views. We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 1108.

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