

MARYLAND PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY



November 20, 2020

Kathleen A. Birrane, Commissioner
Maryland Insurance Administration
200 St. Paul Place, Suite 2700
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

RE: Comments for public meeting on mental health parity regulations on November 23, 2020

Dear Commissioner Birrane:

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) is a state medical organization whose physician members specialize in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of mental illnesses including substance use disorders. Formed more than sixty years ago to support the needs of psychiatrists and their patients, MPS works 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 branch of the American Psychiatric Association covering the state of Maryland excluding the D.C. suburbs, MPS represents over 700 psychiatrists as well as physicians currently in psychiatric training.

Patients with mental illness, substance use disorders, or the comorbidity of both mental illness and substance use disorder often face additional barriers to receiving adequate care than patients who seek treatment for somatic illnesses. Ensuring access to quality evidence-based services to treat mental health and/or substance use disorders should be a priority for the Administration, particularly as our state is experiencing the ongoing mental health impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Even a small delay in coverage for these services can pose irreversible harm to individual patients and produce higher downstream costs to the health care and social service systems, such as inpatient hospitalizations, patient death or disability, and avoidable emergency room utilization and boarding.

As an organization that represents the front-line physicians treating patients with mental illness and/or substance use disorders, MPS is in full support of mental health parity. If you have any questions with regards to this testimony, please feel free to contact MPS lobbyist Thomas Tompsett Jr. at tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com or MPS Associate Director Meagan Floyd at mfloyd@mdpsych.org

Respectfully submitted,

Legislative Action Committee
Maryland Psychiatric Society

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