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January 29, 2024

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The Hon. Pamela Beidle, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Maryland General Assembly
3E Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Hon. Katherine Klausmeier, Vice Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Maryland General Assembly
123 James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Pyramid Healthcare Favorable with Amendments Testimony re Senate Bill 212 – An Act Concerning “Behavioral Health Advisory Council and Commission on Behavioral Health Care Treatment and Access - Alterations”

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and distinguished members of the Committee:

The Pyramid Healthcare, Inc. (“Pyramid Healthcare”) family of companies is providing information and feedback below regarding Senate Bill 212, an act concerning “Behavioral Health Advisory Council and Commission on Behavioral Health Care Treatment and Access - Alterations.” We support the bill with a crucial amendment supported by other behavioral healthcare providers.

As background, Pyramid Healthcare was founded in 1999 and is an integrated behavioral healthcare system that employs over 3,000 professionals caring for 12,000 unique commercial and Medicaid patients per day throughout our residential and outpatient locations across eight states. We offer a treatment continuum providing comprehensive behavioral healthcare specialties, including: substance use disorder, mental health, autism, and eating disorder treatment across an integrated network of service lines and affiliated behavioral healthcare organizations. In Maryland, Pyramid Healthcare operates 170 licensed behavioral healthcare treatment beds in addition to outpatient behavioral health treatment facilities across four locations which serve thousands of clients per year. In addition, we recently received approval for our certificate of need (CON) application to build a residential chemical dependency treatment center in Bowie, Prince George’s County.

These facilities serve adult men and women with substance use disorder and co-occurring mental health disorders by providing medically-managed detoxification, short-term and long-term residential rehabilitation, partial hospitalization (PHP), and intensive outpatient (IOP) services as well as medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for opioid use disorder. All of our facilities are licensed by the State of Maryland and accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

The bill includes a new requirement that the Behavioral Health Commission make recommendations by the end of the year on the financing structure and quality oversight needed to integrate behavioral health services under Maryland Medicaid. Several behavioral health groups are urging support for the bill with an amendment to delay the due date of those recommendations by one year from January 1, 2025 to January 1, 2026. We agree and urge the Committee to delay the implementation of Section XXX of the bill by one year.

(C) THE REPORT REQUIRED ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1, ~~2025~~ [2026], SHALL INCLUDE THE COMMISSION'S FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE FINANCING STRUCTURE AND QUALITY OVERSIGHT NECESSARY TO INTEGRATE SOMATIC AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES IN THE MARYLAND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.¹

This delay is essential to ensure sufficient time exists to transition the Maryland Medicaid Administrative Services Organization (ASO) contract to a new vendor.

Please consider this feedback and amend the legislation accordingly. Thank you for your support of behavioral health providers – including those in both mental health and substance use – in Maryland and for considering our policy proposals and recommendations on behalf of Pyramid Healthcare. If we can provide any additional information or materials, please contact me at crosier@pyramidhc.com or 667-270-1582. In addition, we invite you or a member of the Committee or staff to reach out and schedule a visit to one of our Maryland locations sometime soon to learn more about our programs and services.

Sincerely,



Collan B. Rosier
Vice President of Government Relations

¹ See p. 9, lines 2-6.