



**Date:** March 4, 2024

**To:** The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair

**From:** Aliyah N. Horton, FASAE, CAE, Executive Director, MPhA, 240-688-7808

**Cc:** Members, Senate Finance Committee

**Re: FAVORABLE SB 990** - Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Step Therapy, Fail-First Protocols, and Prior Authorization - Prescription Drugs to Treat Serious Mental Illness

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The Maryland Pharmacists Association (MPhA) urges a favorable report for **SB 990** - Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Step Therapy, Fail-First Protocols, and Prior Authorization - Prescription Drugs to Treat Serious Mental Illness.

- Patients should not be denied medication during a mental health crisis merely because a Pharmacy Benefit Manager denies it.
- This is a patient population that is particularly vulnerable and may not be able to advocate for themselves.
- Delays in providing necessary medication for patients experiencing a mental health crisis may create unnecessarily dire situations for the patient and caregivers.
- While often used as a cost-savings strategy, a disruption in medication based on a step therapy policy and not efficacy may lead to increased expenses to the state due to emergency care and emergency hospital admissions; disruptions in housing and employment; and police interventions.