

**SB0776 RichardKaplowitz\_FAV**

02/13/2025

Richard Keith Kaplowitz

Frederick, MD 21703

**TESTIMONY ON SB#/0776 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**Workgroup to Study the Rise in Adverse Decisions in the State Health Care System –  
Establishment**

**TO:** Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes and members of the Finance Committee

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

**My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#/0776, Workgroup to Study the Rise in Adverse Decisions in the State Health Care System – Establishment**

The first step in determining if a problem exists and to derive possible solutions is to collect data necessary to make informed decisions. The denials of care by medical insurers in Maryland have been rapidly increasing. This bill attempts to reign in this practice by those health insurers. As reported by WYPR on December 12, 2024:

Two of Maryland's top three health insurers ranked above the industry average in claims denials in 2023.

Both Blue Cross Blue Shield, known as CareFirst in the region, and UnitedHealthcare deny their beneficiaries' claims for medical procedures and appointments more than other companies in the field. CareFirst makes up 55% of Maryland's health insurance market share and denied 17% of claims in 2023, according to [ValuePenguin](#), a consumer research site that specializes in insurance. The industry average is 16%.

UnitedHealthcare denied 32% of claims in 2023 and makes up 9% of the state's market share. Kaiser Permanente is Maryland's second largest health insurer with 26% of the market, however, it only denied 7% of claims. However, Kaiser uses a different model than other insurance companies, often using in-house physicians for care.<sup>1</sup>

This bill will establish the Workgroup to Study the Rise in Adverse Decisions in the State Health Care System and make recommendations to improve State reporting on adverse decisions. Because this is a critical problem in healthcare provision to Marylanders the bill will require the Workgroup to report its findings and recommendations to certain committees of the General Assembly by December 1, 2025. Solutions can then be discussed and bills drafted to resolve identified problems for actions by the Maryland General Assembly in 2026.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#/0776**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.wypr.org/wypr-news/2024-12-12/two-of-marylands-top-health-insurers-deny-claims-at-high-rates>