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By: **Delegates Klausmeier, Boutin, Baldwin, and Hubbard**

Introduced and read first time: February 11, 2000

Assigned to: Economic Matters

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A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Health Insurance - Mental Health Treatment - Authorization Procedures**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring that an insurer or managed care system that provides  
4 mental health benefits to establish procedures for authorizing or denying  
5 mental health treatment within a certain time period of the insured or  
6 subscriber having requested mental health services; requiring the insurer or  
7 managed care system to establish a centralized referral system; requiring an  
8 insurer or managed care system to establish a follow-up system; and generally  
9 relating to the authorization of and referrals for mental health benefits.

10 BY adding to

11 Article - Insurance

12 Section 15-802(h)

13 Annotated Code of Maryland

14 (1997 Volume and 1999 Supplement)

15 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
16 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

17 **Article - Insurance**

18 15-802.

19 (H) (1) AN INSURER OR A MANAGED CARE SYSTEM SUBJECT TO THIS  
20 SECTION SHALL ESTABLISH PROCEDURES FOR AUTHORIZING MENTAL HEALTH  
21 TREATMENT THAT:

22 (I) PROVIDE AN INSURED OR SUBSCRIBER WITH AUTHORIZATION  
23 OR DENIAL OF TREATMENT WITHIN 24 HOURS OF A REQUEST FOR TREATMENT;

24 (II) PROVIDE A CENTRALIZED REFERRAL SYSTEM THAT WILL BE  
25 THE SOLE POINT OF CONTACT FOR AN INSURED OR SUBSCRIBER SEEKING MENTAL  
26 HEALTH TREATMENT; AND

27 (III) PROVIDE A SYSTEM FOR THE FOLLOW-UP OF REQUESTS FOR  
28 TREATMENT AND REFERRALS.

1                   (2)       THE REQUIREMENTS OF PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION DO  
2 NOT APPLY WHEN A PERSON IS IN NEED OF EMERGENCY TREATMENT.

3       SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
4 October 1, 2000.