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January 15, 2020

To: The Honorable Delores G. Kelley Chair, Finance Committee

From: Patricia F. O'Connor, Health Education and Advocacy Unit

Re: Senate Bill 113 (Health Insurance - Provider Panels - Definitions of Provider and Health <u>Care Services): Support</u>

The Office of the Attorney General's Health Education and Advocacy Unit (HEAU) supports Senate Bill 113 because consumers would benefit from improvements to the network adequacy statute, Md. Code Ann., Ins. § 15-112. The statute is intended to ensure that all enrollees in plans with provider panels "have access to providers and covered services without unreasonable travel or delay." Md. Code Ann., Ins. §15-112(b)(3)(i). But enrollees continue to complain about lack of access, despite having paid substantial premiums to carriers for their plans.

The bill expands current definitions in a way that would clearly include facilities and pharmacies. As a result, those applicants would be subject to the statute's framework for credentialing that carriers must comply with for all other applicants to provider panels, instead of a carrier's own (usually more burdensome) credentialing process.

We hope enrollees will have improved access to behavioral health services, in particular, if the bill is enacted. Easing participation by more facilities in provider panels as the bill intends would also improve access to other services. ("Health care facility" means a health care setting or institution providing physical, mental, or substance use disorder health care services [and] includes a hospital; an ambulatory surgical or treatment center; a skilled nursing facility; a residential treatment center; an urgent care center; a diagnostic, laboratory, or imaging center; a rehabilitation facility; and any other therapeutic health care setting" Md. Code Ann., Ins. §15-112(a)(10)(punctuation omitted).

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report by the Committee.

cc: Members of the Finance Committee