



Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Bill Number: Senate Bill 638

**Title: Maryland Insurance Commissioner – Specialty Mental Health Services and
Payment of Claims – Enforcement**

Hearing Date: February 24, 2021

Position: Support

The Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors of Maryland (LCPCM) supports *Senate Bill 638 – Maryland Insurance Commissioner – Specialty Mental Health Services and Payment of Claims – Enforcement*. This bill would require the Maryland Insurance Commissioner to enforce compliance with reimbursement provisions under Maryland’s Administrative Service Organization (ASO) for behavioral health services.

Since the transfer of Maryland’s ASO from Beacon Health Options to Optum Maryland in early 2020, behavioral health providers, including licensed clinical professional counselors, have consistently experienced problems with Optum’s claims system. We regularly hear from our members of the difficulties in managing claims and revenue.

While we are very concerned by the difficulties facing clinical professional counselors in managing the new ASO system, we are equally concerned that unless these issues are addressed, fewer behavioral health providers will choose to accept Medicaid payment. We already know anecdotally, that many providers choose not to accept Medicaid reimbursement in lieu of private insurance and self-pay. If we lose Medicaid providers, wait times for individuals who cannot self-pay when seeking behavioral health services will worsen. We are at a point in time, in part due to the current COVID crisis, where demand is increasing for behavioral health services. Providers need the help of the Maryland General Assembly to find solutions so that providers can serve Marylanders seeking care.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony, and we urge a favorable vote. If we can provide any further information, please contact Rachael faulkner at rfaulkner@policypartners.net or 410-693-4000.