

Delegate Shane Pendergrass, Chair
Delegate Joseline Pena-Melnyk, Vice- Chair
House Health and Government Operations Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401



MARYLAND
ONCOLOGY
HEMATOLOGY

March 10, 2022

Support HB 1015: Pharmacy Benefits Managers – Prohibitions Related to Reimbursement and Use of Specific Pharmacy - Application

Honorable Chair Pendergrass, Vice-Chair Pena-Melnyk, and Members of the HGO Committee,

On behalf of Maryland Oncology Hematology (MOH), we would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in **support of HB 1015: Pharmacy Benefit Managers – Prohibitions Related to Reimbursement and Use of Specific Pharmacy Requirement – Application**. Passage of this bill would strengthen existing Maryland anti-steering laws by repealing statutory exceptions that expose cancer patients to harmful steering policies that could negatively impact their access to care.

MOH is the largest independent Medical Oncology and Hematology group in Maryland with over 45 physicians practicing at 14 locations across Maryland. We provide thousands of Maryland patients with increased access to integrated, evidence-based cancer care and extensive opportunities to participate in clinical trials. We believe it is beneficial to our patients that their therapies are provided in a community setting where they can remain close to their home and their family. As a component of maintaining quality care within the community, it is critical that cancer patients be empowered to access their life-saving medications in a way that is most convenient for them.

While we commend the state for addressing and enacting laws that prohibit patient steering, the law as it stands exempts specialty drugs and mail order drugs from this equation. These exemptions undermine the original intent of the law by incentivizing pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) to steer patients to their affiliated pharmacies.

Patients with complex malignancies, like cancer, require timely access to specialty medications such as oral chemotherapy, to ensure the best possible outcomes. For many patients, timely access is synonymous with the convenience of pharmacy choice. When patients are able to access their medications in a way that fits with their schedules and individual needs they are more likely to adhere to their treatment plan and more likely to receive the benefits of the drugs they are prescribed.

If you have any further question regarding the impact of pharmacy steering on cancer patients, please do not hesitate to reach out. We welcome the opportunity to be a further resource for you. Thank you for your time and we hope that you will consider joining us in our support for this measure.

Sincerely,

Joseph M. Haggerty, MD, FACP
President, MOH

Kashif Firozvi, MD
Managing Partner, MOH

Robert Davis, MBA, MSIS
Executive Director, MOH