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## **HB 32 – Mental Health Law – Petitions for Emergency Evaluation – Electronic Record**

### **Position: Support**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments in support of House Bill 32. This bill authorizes a petition for emergency evaluation to be in the form of an electronic record by repealing and reenacting with amendments existing Md. Health Code Ann. §§ 10-601 and 10-624.

As part of its mission, CareFirst is committed to driving transformation of the healthcare experience with and for our members and communities. We believe ensuring equitable access to quality, affordable behavioral health services is essential to advancing holistic care and improving health outcomes. Fundamental to holistic care is an informed strategy to address the behavioral health needs of our members and the communities we serve.

Authorizing petitions for emergency evaluations to be in the form of electronic records will enable providers to quickly arrange for a patient's transportation to the nearest emergency facility, if needed, which should minimize the likelihood of adverse events. Efficiency is critical to improving mental health outcomes as it ensures timely delivery of care in urgent situations. Furthermore, helping individuals quickly reach the emergency facility and be examined by a physician will allow CareFirst and other entities that provide mental health care and critical support services to deploy resources more effectively.

CareFirst strongly supports the policy goals advanced by House Bill 22. We look forward to continued partnerships with legislators, the Maryland Health Department, mental health providers, public health groups, and other stakeholders to employ targeted strategies to improve the mental health and wellbeing of our members, provider partners, employees, and communities.

### **We urge a favorable report.**

#### **About CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield**

*In its 84<sup>th</sup> year of service, CareFirst, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, is a not-for-profit healthcare company which, through its affiliates and subsidiaries, offers a comprehensive portfolio of health insurance products and administrative services to 3.4 million individuals and employers in Maryland, the District of Columbia, and Northern Virginia. In 2019, CareFirst invested \$43 million to improve overall health, and increase the accessibility, affordability, safety, and quality of healthcare throughout its market areas. To learn more about CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield, visit our website at [www.carefirst.com](http://www.carefirst.com) and our transforming healthcare page at [www.carefirst.com/transformation](http://www.carefirst.com/transformation), or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) or [Instagram](#).*