



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Secretary

February 16, 2022

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB 578 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Prior Authorization for Drug Products to Treat an Opioid Use Disorder – Prohibition – Letter of Information

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of information on House Bill (HB) 578 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Prior Authorization for Drug Products to Treat an Opioid Use Disorder. HB 578 will prohibit MDH from imposing any prior authorization requirements for prescription drugs used to treat an opioid use disorder (OUD) that contain methadone, buprenorphine, or naltrexone.

Currently, MDH covers approximately 280,000 claims annually for brand name Suboxone film (buprenorphine and naloxone). The brand name Suboxone film is considered a preferred drug by MDH, is available without prior authorization, and is eligible for substantially higher rebates than other forms. Other formulations, including generic suboxone film and tablets, are classified as nonpreferred and subject to prior authorization due to costs.

If MDH is prohibited from imposing any prior authorization requirements, utilization may shift from brand name to generic formulations. While federal law prohibits MDH from sharing dollar amounts of rebates collected on specific drugs, implementing HB 578 will put MDH at risk of losing millions of dollars in drug rebates each year.

Additionally, there are clinical concerns regarding the removal of prior authorizations from certain OUD drugs. For instance, if injectable OUD treatments are taken prior to completion of clinical evaluation, the patient can experience a medical crisis due to sudden withdrawal.

If you have any questions, please contact Heather Shek, Director of Governmental Affairs, at heather.shek@maryland.gov or (443) 695-4218.

Sincerely,

Dennis R. Schrader
Secretary