



Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Mid-Atlantic States, Inc
2101 East Jefferson Street
Rockville, Maryland 20852

March 7, 2023

The Honorable Melony Griffith
Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB 581 – Letter of Information

Dear Chair Griffith and Members of the Committee:

Kaiser Permanente appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on SB 581, “Behavioral Health Care Coordination Value-Based Purchasing Pilot Program.” Kaiser Permanente is the largest private integrated health care delivery system in the United States, delivering health care to over 12 million members in eight states and the District of Columbia.¹ Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States, which operates in Maryland, provides and coordinates complete health care services for over 825,000 members. In Maryland, we deliver care to approximately 475,000 members.

SB 581 solves a problem that Kaiser Permanente has been looking to address for a number of years. KP participates as an MCO in the HealthChoice program, but due to the design of Maryland’s Medicaid program and Kaiser’s model of care, KP is unable to provide the same specialty behavioral health services to Medicaid members that are provided to their Commercial and Medicare members. During the pandemic, KP had thousands of members transition from Commercial coverage to Medicaid due to a job loss or other circumstance, and those individuals lost access to the providers they were able to previously see.

In response to this problem, KP approached the legislature and MDH about establishing a pilot program to allow KP to serve behavioral health patients through HealthChoice; however there was no interest in establishing a managed care behavioral health program in HealthChoice at that time. SB 581 provides an alternate avenue for Kaiser Permanente to provide specialty behavioral health services to its Medicaid members.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please feel free to contact me at Allison.W.Taylor@kp.org or (202) 924-7496 with questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Allison Taylor".

Allison Taylor
Director of Government Relations
Kaiser Permanente

¹ Kaiser Permanente comprises Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc., the nation’s largest not-for-profit health plan, and its health plan subsidiaries outside California and Hawaii; the not-for-profit Kaiser Foundation Hospitals, which operates 39 hospitals and over 650 other clinical facilities; and the Permanente Medical Groups, self-governed physician group practices that exclusively contract with Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and its health plan subsidiaries to meet the health needs of Kaiser Permanente’s members.