

House Bill 813 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Prescription Digital Therapeutics

SUPPORT

House Health & Government Operations Committee

March 2, 2023

MDDCSAM is a chapter of the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) and represents physicians and associated healthcare professionals from different disciplines with expertise in treatment of addiction. Our goals are to diagnose, treat, and advocate for people with the chronic disease of addiction and its related problems.

MDDCSAM supports House Bill 813, which would require Maryland Medicaid to add to its benefit coverage of digital therapeutics available by prescription. The demand for mental health and substance use disorder treatment continues to outpace access. To effectively meet the behavioral health needs of our patients, we must take advantage of all the evidence-based tools available. Prescription digital therapeutics (PDTs) are one such evidence-based solution.

PDTs are authorized by the FDA, which means they've been proven to be effective. Since the first PDT was authorized in 2018, about a dozen more have been authorized, including those for mental health and substance use disorders.

As Addiction Medicine physicians and other healthcare professionals, we recognize the importance of PDTs as useful, evidence-based treatment extenders. Via clinical software, PDTs offer patients 24/7 access to validated behavioral treatments, while also offering patient engagement and tools for tracking patient progress for the providers who prescribe them. However, many patients, particularly those with low socioeconomic status, are denied access to these tools due to the absence of insurance coverage. Absence of Medicaid benefit coverage for PDTs risks furthering already existing income, race, and ethnicity-associated inequities in treatment access.

Given that Maryland continues to see an increase in the number of people dying from overdoses, we believe all effective tools should be available to providers and patients. We urge your support for House Bill 813.