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March 6, 2024

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The Hon. Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk, Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee
Maryland General Assembly
241 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Hon. Bonnie Cullison, Vice Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee
Maryland General Assembly
241 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Pyramid Healthcare Favorable with Amendments Testimony re House Bill 1048 – An Act Concerning “Behavioral Health Advisory Council and Commission on Behavioral Health Care Treatment and Access - Alterations”

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and distinguished members of the Committee:

The Pyramid Healthcare, Inc. (“Pyramid Healthcare”) family of companies is providing information and feedback below regarding House Bill 1048, an act concerning “Behavioral Health Advisory Council and Commission on Behavioral Health Care Treatment and Access - Alterations.” We support the bill with a crucial amendment supported by other behavioral healthcare providers.

Pyramid Healthcare is an integrated behavioral healthcare system serving Medicaid and commercial clients in 9 states across a continuum of residential and outpatient substance abuse, mental health, autism, and eating disorder treatment services. We employ over 3,600 team members across our 80+ active facilities which treat approximately 12,000 clients on any given day.

In Maryland, we operate four locations: a detox & residential and an outpatient treatment center in California, a detox and residential treatment center in Charlotte Hall, and a detox & residential treatment center in Joppa. In total, we have approximately 170 substance use disorder residential treatment beds for adult Medicaid clients across the state. We are currently under construction on our new Prince George’s facility and expected to begin operations in mid-2024 with approximately 75 detox and residential substance use treatment beds for adults with substance use disorder. That facility will be located in outside of Bowie and will serve the residents of Prince George’s County, Anne Arundel County, and throughout central Maryland.

The bill includes a new requirement that the Behavioral Health Commission make recommendations by the end of the year on the financing structure and quality oversight needed to integrate behavioral health services under Maryland Medicaid. Several behavioral health groups are urging support for the bill with an amendment to delay the due date of those recommendations by one year from January 1, 2025 to January 1, 2026. We agree and urge the Committee to delay the implementation of Section 13-4807 of the bill by one year:

(C) THE REPORT REQUIRED ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2025 [2026], SHALL INCLUDE THE COMMISSION'S FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE FINANCING STRUCTURE AND QUALITY OVERSIGHT NECESSARY TO INTEGRATE SOMATIC AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES IN THE MARYLAND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.¹

This delay is essential to ensure sufficient time exists to transition the Maryland Medicaid Administrative Services Organization (ASO) contract to a new vendor.

Please consider this feedback and amend the legislation accordingly. Thank you for your support of behavioral health providers – including those in both mental health and substance use – in Maryland and for considering our policy proposals and recommendations on behalf of Pyramid Healthcare. If we can provide any additional information or materials, please contact me at crosier@pyramidhc.com or 667-270-1582. In addition, we invite you or a member of the Committee or staff to reach out and schedule a visit to one of our Maryland locations sometime soon to learn more about our programs and services.

Sincerely,



Collan B. Rosier
Vice President of Government Relations

**CC: Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
Michelle Firmin, Assistant to Chair**

¹ See p. 9, lines 2-6.