



*“Advocating for Nurse Practitioners since 1992”*

**Bill:** SB 990/HB 1423- Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Step Therapy, Fail-First Protocols, and Prior Authorization - Prescription Drugs to Treat Serious Mental Illness

**Position:** SUPPORT

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Nurse Practitioner Association of Maryland (NPAM), representing over 849 nurse practitioners throughout the state, we offer our support for SB 990/HB 1423.

As an association representing nurse practitioners who are at the forefront of patient care, we believe that this bill is crucial for ensuring timely access to appropriate medication for individuals grappling with serious mental health conditions. By eliminating unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles, this legislation empowers healthcare providers to make decisions based on clinical judgment and the individual needs of their patients.

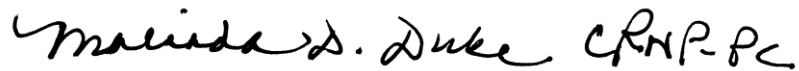
Several members work as psychiatric nurse practitioners and have encountered a number of situations that this bill would have helped. To name a few:

- A pregnant patient diagnosed with bipolar disorder. The only safe pregnancy mood stabilizer medication was declined without prior authorization.
- A female patient diagnosed with bipolar disorder failed multiple trials of mood stabilizers. Stable on one medication for over a month and kept getting declined. It took multiple appeals to Maryland Medicaid to get approved.
- A male diagnosed with bipolar disorder who experienced a drug overdose. He was stabilized on medication. Insurance denied the medication and wanted him switched to another. The provider had to write multiple letters to get approved.
- Patient diagnosed with bipolar disorder who had Medicaid was stabilized and discharged from an inpatient admission. The medication required a PA and step therapy once he saw an outpatient provider.

- A patient was prescribed one medication, but the insurer refused with recommendation to fail on one of two other drugs first until the provider completed a peer-to-peer call.
- Patient prescribed one medication, but the insurer denied saying that they would not agree because the patient was over 18. Provider started that medication because the patient was using substances, and the provider did not want to prescribe a controlled medication. The insurer denied the prescribed medication and recommended a controlled substance.

It is our firm belief that timely access to appropriate medication is paramount in managing mental health conditions effectively.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Malinda D. Duke CPNP-PC". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Malinda D. Duke CPNP-PC, CDCES  
Executive Director, NPAM  
5372 Iron Pen Place  
Columbia, MD 21044 [NPAMexdir@npedu.com](mailto:NPAMexdir@npedu.com)  
443-367-0277 (office)  
410-404-1747 (mobile)