The Maryland Academy of Physician Assistants

mdapa

To: **House Health and Government Operations Committee**

Bill: **House Bill 1087 – Health Insurance - Step Therapy or Fail-First Protocols - Drugs to Treat Associated Conditions of Advanced Metastatic Cancer**

Date: **February 28, 2025**

Position: **Favorable**

The Maryland Academy of Physician Assistants (MdAPA) strongly supports *House Bill 1087 – Health Insurance - Step Therapy or Fail-First Protocols - Drugs to Treat Associated Conditions of Advanced Metastatic Cancer*. The bill would prohibit private and public insurers from requiring a step therapy or fail-first protocol before covering a prescription drug that is used to treat a symptom of, or a side effect from, treatment of stage four advanced metastatic cancer that the treating provider determines will negatively impact the insured's or enrollee's health if left untreated. Use of the prescription drug must be consistent with best practices and supported by peer–reviewed medical literature.

A fail-first protocol, also known as step therapy, is an insurance policy that requires patients to try a lower-cost drug before getting their prescribed medication. This policy is often used for expensive cancer drugs as a way to control costs. Patients deserve to quickly assess their condition with their doctors and find the best course of treatment for their individual medical needs. Access to life-saving treatment should not be left to the whim of an insurance company.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.