



To: Senate Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill: House Bill 1013 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Nonopioid Drugs for the Treatment of Pain

Date: February 28, 2025

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Academy of Physician Assistants (MdAPA) supports *House Bill 1013 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Nonopioid Drugs for the Treatment of Pain*. The bill would require Maryland Medicaid and private insurance to provide coverage for nonopioid drugs used for the treatment of pain to the same extent as an opioid or narcotic drug used for the treatment of pain. Insurance companies cannot require prior authorization, step therapy protocol, or fail-first protocol for the nonopioid drug.

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. These protocols, along with prior authorizations, are ways that insurance companies try to reduce their costs. However, these types of requirements actually serve as barriers to treatment for patients. These types of requirements can potentially delay access to necessary medication and causing worsened symptoms while prioritizing cost-cutting over individual medical needs. By removing these barriers, this bill will promote non-opioid options for chronic pain management.

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