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Legislative District 21
Prince George's and
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—
Chair

Health and Government
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Rules and Executive
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February 11, 2025

HB 995 - Workgroup to Study the Rise in Adverse Decisions in the State Health Care System

SPONSOR TESTIMONY: Delegate Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk (Favorable with Amendments)

Good afternoon, Madam Vice Chair and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee. I am pleased to present House Bill 995: Workgroup to Study the Rise in Adverse Decisions in the State Health Care System.

Adverse decisions, which include claim denials, prior authorization denials, medical necessity denials, and coverage restrictions, may prevent patients from receiving timely and life-saving care. These decisions often lack transparency, create financial burdens, and limit access to critical treatments.

As more Marylanders navigate a complex healthcare system, insurers' decisions on prior authorizations and medical necessity determinations have serious consequences. Too often, patients experience unnecessary delays or treatment denials, and providers face administrative barriers that interfere with patient care. The absence of data on the occurrences of these denials makes it challenging to assess the full scope of the problem so that we can hold insurance providers accountable in Maryland.

HB 995 establishes a workgroup to examine the root causes of the increasing number of adverse decisions, evaluate reporting requirements, and propose solutions to improve patient protection. The workgroup will be composed of policymakers, state health officials, insurers, providers, and patient advocates who will analyze current trends, assess how denials impact care, and recommend improvements to reporting systems, definitions, and appeals processes.

This bill is a critical first step in addressing the systemic challenges that prevent Marylanders from receiving the care they need. We can work toward a more equitable and efficient healthcare system by improving transparency, accountability, and standardization in how adverse decisions are made and reported. I urge this committee to support HB 995 to ensure that Maryland's healthcare system prioritizes patients over bureaucracy and allows providers to deliver timely, appropriate, and necessary care.