



Senate Bill 490 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Step Therapy, Fail-First Protocols, and Prior Authorization - Prescription Drugs to Treat Serious Mental Illness

UNFAVORABLE
Senate Finance Committee
February 17, 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony for Senate Bill 490 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Step Therapy, Fail-First Protocols, and Prior Authorization - Prescription Drugs to Treat Serious Mental Illness. The Maryland Managed Care Organization Association (MMCOA), which is comprised of all nine MCOs that serve Medicaid, is committed to ensuring access to the prescription drugs and therapies that our members depend on for their health and wellbeing.

SB490 would remove an important set of managed care tools by prohibiting the utilization of prior authorization, step therapy, and fail-first protocols for the prescription of certain medications, including those used to treat schizophrenia, major depression, post-traumatic stress disorder or medication induced movement disorder associated with the treatment of serious mental illness.

Utilization management of prescription drugs is an important managed care function. These tools help determine the therapeutic appropriateness of a drug, monitor for over utilization, possible therapeutic duplications, drug contraindications, drug interactions, and clinically appropriate dosing. SB490 would significantly limit MCOs' ability to identify and address potential problems with the use of these drugs, which could lead to increased costs and adverse health outcomes for enrollees.

The bill would create a one-size-fits-all approach to the management of certain prescription drugs, which would limit MCOs' ability to tailor their programs to the unique needs of their members, including those with substance use disorders, mental illness, or other conditions that affect the prescribing and use of certain prescription drugs.

For these reasons we respectfully request an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 490.

Please contact Joe Winn, Executive Director of MMCOA, with any questions regarding this testimony at jwinn@marylandmco.org.