

February 13, 2026

Maryland Senate  
Finance Committee  
3 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

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

On behalf of the pediatric nurse practitioners (PNPs) and fellow pediatric-focused advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) of the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP) Chesapeake Chapter, I am writing to express our **support of Senate Bill 490 Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Step Therapy, Fail-First Protocols, and Prior Authorization - Prescription Drugs to Treat Serious Mental Illness.**

This bill would prohibit the Maryland Medical Assistance Program from applying a prior authorization requirement, a step therapy protocol, or a fail-first protocol for prescription drugs used to treat certain mental illnesses including: Bipolar disorder, Schizophrenia, Major Depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, or medication induced movement disorder associated with the treatment of a mental health disorder. Step therapy, also known as "fail first" or "step protocol", is a prior authorization practice that can affect prescription drugs used to treat serious mental illnesses. Insurers require patients to try one or more alternative medications before they can access medicine that has been recommended and prescribed by their provider. Insurers choose the alternative medications, not the patient's healthcare provider. This approach places the decision-making power in the hands of insurers rather than those who are directly managing the patient's care.

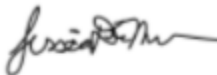
By placing the patient on the insurer's preferred alternative medication and not placing the patient on the medication that is recommended and prescribed by their provider can result in several adverse outcomes.

- Step therapy can delay necessary treatment and lead to adverse reactions
- It can force patients into a trial-and-error approach with treatments that may be less effective
- It can lead to worsened symptoms and long-term permanent harm to patients' health and well-being

For these reasons the Maryland Chesapeake Chapter of NAPNAP extends their support to **support of SB 490 Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Step Therapy, Fail-First Protocols, and Prior Authorization - Prescription Drugs to Treat Serious Mental Illness and requests a favorable report.**

The pediatric advanced practice nurses of your state are grateful to you for your attention to these crucial issues. The Chesapeake Chapter of the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners membership includes over 200 primary and acute care pediatric nurse practitioners who are committed to improving the health and advocating for Maryland's pediatric patients. If we can be of any further assistance, or if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the chapter legislative chair, Dr. JD Murphy at [mdchesnapnapleg@outlook.com](mailto:mdchesnapnapleg@outlook.com).

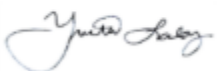
Sincerely,



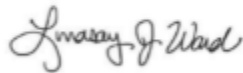
Dr. Jessica D. Murphy DNP, CPNP-AC, CPHON, CNE  
Maryland Chapter Legislative Chair



Dr. Evgenia Ogorodova DNP, CPNP-PC  
Chapter Legislative Co-Chair



Dr. Yvette Laboy DNP, CPNP-AC,  
CCRN, CPN; Chapter President



Ms. Lindsay Ward MSN, CPNP-PC,  
IBCLC; Immediate Past-President



Dr. Samantha Hoffman DNP, MS,  
CPNP-PC; Chapter President-elect