



Maryland Community Health System

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

Committee: House Health and Government Operations

Hearing Date: February 17, 2026

Position: Support

The Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) supports Senate Bill 490 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Step Therapy, Fail-First Protocols, and Prior Authorization - Prescription Drugs to Treat Serious Mental Illness. The bill would streamline the process for prescribers in ensuring their patients could access needed medication for serious mental illnesses.

Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) is a network of federally qualified health centers that serve underserved communities in urban, suburban, and rural areas across Maryland. Currently, patients with serious mental illnesses face unnecessary delays and administrative hurdles due to insurers requiring additional steps before covering necessary medications. These barriers can lead to treatment delays, which may negatively impact patients' health and well-being.

The bill aims to reduce these obstacles by simplifying the process for prescribers, allowing them to more easily ensure that their patients receive the medication they need without facing extensive paperwork or additional approval processes. This would help ensure timely access to effective treatments, improving overall health outcomes for those with serious mental illnesses.

We ask for a favorable report on this legislation. If we can answer any questions, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.