



Maryland  
Hospital Association

February 2, 2021

Adam Kane  
Chairman  
Health Services Cost Review Commission  
4160 Patterson Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21215

Dear Chairman Kane:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 10.37.10.26. The proposed regulatory changes are intended to align statutory changes to Maryland Health General 19-214.1 as a result of 2020 legislation.

MHA supports patient friendly policies, and we support the HSCRC's proposed regulations. Our comments below seek to confirm our understanding of HSCRC's intent.

**The proposed regulation requires the hospital to include the information sheet in each written communication to the patient regarding collection of the hospital bill and to notify patients about their financial assistance policy in certain instances.**

The information sheet references the hospital's financial assistance policy and how to apply for financial assistance. Hospitals must include a copy of the information sheet with the hospital bill. We are confirming that the proposed change would require the hospital to include a copy of the information sheet with *each* bill—first, second, third, etc.—and any communication to the patient about collecting the bill.

Hospitals already must reference their financial assistance policy in the information sheet and post conspicuous notice of their financial assistance policies throughout the physical hospital. MHA believes hospitals already provide notice of their financial assistance policies and that requiring the information sheet to be shared at certain times will enhance this notification. Hospitals also provide notice in local newspapers, on fliers, and on their websites.

**HB 1420 required HSCRC to establish a process for the patient to file a complaint. The proposed regulations would require the hospital information sheet to inform the patient of their right to file a complaint.**

Hospitals agree the information sheet is the logical place to inform patients of their rights to file a complaint, and that HSCRC should establish a process to do so. However, hospitals might also use other means to inform patients of this right, including its website or in communication with patients about payment for services.

**Hospitals will incur expenses by implementing the proposed regulations. The Notice of Proposed Action only identifies an indeterminable benefit.**

We agree *awareness* of financial assistance may improve. We disagree with the assertion that patients will have greater *access* to financial assistance: all patients, regardless of insurance, have access to financial assistance at every Maryland hospital.

Maryland hospitals assist our patients in a variety of ways. Every day, we help uninsured patients qualify for medical assistance so they can access the entire spectrum of health care services without having to seek financial support every time they do. We work to help insured patients understand their coverage, including the impact of high-deductible plans and out-of-pocket costs. We support patients applying for financial assistance when they are not eligible for Medicaid or need help with their out-of-pocket costs. We actively seek to connect with our patients on these difficult matters, and we are always ready and willing to address each unique situation.

Revising the information sheet to include the required references, providing the information sheet with all follow-up communications, creating the information sheet in required languages, and complying with other proposed regulations will result in additional expenses. Hospitals support the requirements and will use appropriate resources to do so. We would appreciate if the impact statement would reflect a cost impact.

Thank you again for your careful consideration of these matters. Maryland hospitals appreciate being able to work directly with HSCRC staff to shape hospital payment policies. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,



Brett McCone  
Senior Vice President, Health Care Payment

cc: Joseph Antos, Ph.D., Vice Chairman  
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