Senate Bill 872 – Health Insurance – Consumer Protections

Position: *Support*
February 26, 2020
Senate Finance Committee

MHA Position

Maryland's 61 nonprofit hospitals and health systems care for millions of people each year, treating 2.3 million in emergency departments and delivering more than 67,000 babies. The 108,000 people they employ are caring for Maryland around-the-clock every day—delivering leading edge, high-quality medical service and investing a combined $1.75 billion in their communities, expanding access to housing, education, transportation, and food.

Broad based, affordable and comprehensive health insurance is integral to hospitals' ability to provide high-quality care. It also is key to the state's success under the Total Cost of Care Model, which pushes accountability for whole-person care, including population health. The coverage reforms and expansion ushered in by the Affordable Care Act (ACA) are integral to the state's continued success under the Model. That is why Maryland hospitals support SB 872, which ensures these market reforms are preserved in the state.

ACA dramatically improved the ability for people with preexisting conditions to buy coverage. In 2010, before the law passed, a Commonwealth Fund survey found 70% of people with health problems said it was very difficult or impossible to buy affordable coverage; just 36% said they purchased a plan. By 2016, the percentage of people who had trouble buying an affordable plan dropped to 42%; 60% bought a plan.

By codifying these protections in state law, SB 872 allows hospitals, other providers, communities, and the state to meet the requirements of our Total Cost of Care Model while also protecting Marylanders from federal actions that have weakened the ACA, particularly its bans on denying coverage and charging more for those with preexisting conditions.

For these reasons, we urge a *favorable* report for SB 872.

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