



Maryland
Hospital Association

**Senate Bill 761: Health Insurance – Payments to Noncontracting Specialists and
Noncontracting Nonphysician Specialists**

Position: *Support*

Bill Summary

SB 761 requires a carrier to inform members and beneficiaries of the procedure to request a certain referral to certain noncontracting health care providers; requiring, under certain circumstances, certain insurers, nonprofit health service plans, and health maintenance organizations to pay a certain amount for certain services by some noncontracting health care providers when a referral is granted to the member; etc

MHA Position

Under Maryland's unique Total Cost of Care agreement with the federal government, Maryland's hospitals are working to lower costs and improve population health. In addition to treating illness and injury, hospitals are reaching out beyond their four walls to keep people well and improve the health of the communities they serve. The result: hospitals are taking care of the whole person, empowering patients and families, coordinating care among different providers, and addressing social factors that influence people's health.

Central to this mission is ensuring the estimated one in five Marylanders who suffer from mental health and substance use disorders have access to the behavioral health care services they need.

SB 761 helps to expand access to more mental health and substance use treatment providers by allowing patients to seek care outside of carrier networks and requiring carriers to pay a set reimbursement to those providers. The bill also, rightly, prohibits providers who decide to accept this set reimbursement from seeking payments from patients for the higher cost of out-of-network care.

In this way, the bill has the potential to incentivize insurance carriers to begin appropriately including these providers in their networks and setting adequate reimbursement rates.

SB 761 is in line with the hospital field's commitment to providing the right care, at the right time, in the right setting, while controlling costs.

For these reasons, we respectfully request the committee give SB 761 a *favorable* report.