

13 January 2016

Governor Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor Hogan,

Maryland's health care providers, advocates and Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) have witnessed firsthand the devastating impact that a loss in health care coverage can have on an individual. Since Medicaid redeterminations resumed in April 2015, we have witnessed an extraordinary increase in the number of individuals who lost Medicaid coverage and have experienced extreme difficulties in regaining coverage. Between March 2015 and November 2015, the last month for which data is publicly available, enrollment in the HealthChoice program has dropped by over 114,000 individuals - Marylanders who are now cut off from the health care system. The vast majority of these consumers continue to be eligible for coverage through HealthChoice, but are unable to easily re-enroll because of administrative and technical barriers. While the 46 undersigned organizations appreciate the fact that many of the challenges associated with the redetermination process were in place before you assumed your role as Maryland's governor, we believe that under your leadership there is an opportunity to improve the current Medicaid enrollment and re-enrollment process for Maryland's most vulnerable citizens.

Attached is an issue brief that outlines challenges with the current redetermination process and offers concrete recommendations to improve the process. Specific recommendations include:

- Increased in-person assistance at Connector Entities and Local Departments of Health and Social Services
- Widespread dissemination of culturally competent communications to consumers and providers regarding the process of how and where individuals may receive assistance with the redetermination process
- Development and implementation of specific policies and procedures that would address the medical needs of Medicaid eligible individuals who have lost coverage
- Technical adjustments that would allow redetermination dates to be included in the Electronic Verification System (EVS), allowing providers to alert patients of pending redetermination dates
- Changes to the Certified Application Counselor Process, including a simplified sponsoring entity application, increased authority to assist with MCO enrollment, and simplified identity proofing
- Increased flexibility for MCO to permit them to assist current member who directly contact the MCO requesting redetermination assistance
- Improved interagency collaboration, communication and training so that each agency's role in Medicaid enrollment and re-enrollment is clear to its employees, consumers, providers and advocates, as well as across agencies

- Resolution to specific IT challenges
- Establishment of a Task Force to develop and implement specific strategies to improve the redetermination process

We appreciate that you and your leadership team have implemented strategies to address the redetermination issue, but we urge you to do more. As stated earlier, as the front line providers, payers and advocates of health care services, we have encountered many heart-wrenching stories of those who have lost Medicaid coverage, including:

- Cancer patients who cannot pursue screening and treatment such as, radiology, home health care or home infusion
- Children and youth who cannot access medications such as asthma inhalers, vaccinations and HIV treatment
- Individuals suffering from substance use disorders and mental health issues who regress due to the lack of consistency in treatment, counseling and medication

We welcome the opportunity to collaborate with your team to explore opportunities to improve the current redetermination process. Fundamental principles in health care financing are prevention and early intervention. These are best achieved through access to health care coverage. In addition, loss of insurance coverage leads to pent up health care needs that ultimately result in people receiving health care in the most expensive setting possible. Failure to invest in improving the redetermination process now will only result in future increased Medicaid costs.

Please do not hesitate to contact me, as representative of the supporting organizations, with questions. We look forward to working with you to resolve these complex but critically important issues affecting tens of thousands of Marylanders across the state.

Sincerely,



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CC:

Van Mitchell, Secretary, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Shannon McMahon, Deputy Secretary, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Thomas V. Mike Miller, President of the Senate

Michael E. Busch, Speaker of the House

Thomas McLain Middleton, Chair, Senate Finance Committee

Peter A. Hammen, Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee

Carolyn Quattrochi, Executive Director, Maryland Health Benefit Exchange

Craig Williams, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor

Katie Wunderlich, Deputy Legislative Officer, Office of the Governor

Supporting Organizations

Access to Wholistic and Productive Living Institute, Inc.

Advocates for Children and Youth

Amerigroup

The Arc of Maryland

Community Behavioral Health Association of Maryland

The Coordinating Center

Drug Policy and Public Health Strategies Clinic, University of Maryland Carey School of Law

Homeless Persons Representation Project, Inc.

Institute for Behavior Resources, Inc.

Johns Hopkins

Kaiser Permanente

League of Women Voters of Maryland

MADC

Maryland Alliance for the Poor

Maryland Clinical Social Work Coalition

Maryland Disability Law Center

Maryland Nonprofits

Maryland Physicians Care

Maryland Women's Coalition for Health Care Reform

MedStar Family Choice

MedStar Health

Mental Health Association of Maryland

National Alliance on Mental Illness - Maryland (and 12 Chapters)

National Association of Social Workers - Maryland Chapter

NCADD-Maryland

Primary Care Coalition of Montgomery County

Priority Partners

Public Justice Center

Riverside Health

Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

United HealthCare

Voices for Quality Care (LTC), Inc

Welfare Advocates