



WOMAN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

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Senate Bill 0929 – Health Insurance – Network Access Standards and Provider Network Directories Senate Finance Committee March 2, 2016 SUPPORT

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning one of the important priorities of the **Woman's Democratic Club of Montgomery County (WDC)** for the 2016 legislative session. WDC is the largest and most active Democratic Club in the County with over 400 members (both men and women). Through our newly formed Advocacy Committee, we are keeping our members informed about upcoming legislation and advocating in support of legislation that addresses our priorities.

WDC urges the passage of Senate Bill 0929 – Health Insurance – Network Access Standards and Provider Network Directories. This bill will correct serious deficiencies in the CRISP Provider Directory used by Maryland Health Connection, and help ensure that patients can access providers without undue wait times or lengthy travel.

Studies sponsored by the Mental Health Association of Maryland and the Maryland Women's Coalition for Health Care Reform Network found that the CRISP Provider Directory available to purchasers of health insurance on Maryland Health Connection had serious errors and deficiencies. Consumers rely on this information to select health plans with providers and facilities they know in the stated network. When those providers turn out not to be in the network or no longer take patients, consumers must go to elsewhere often incurring significant additional cost to go to out of network providers for needed care. Consumers often feel cheated as they picked a specific plan based on the directory. In addition, many networks do not have an adequate number of providers in some specialties, especially behavioral health and crisis centers. Without this bill, In 2017 Maryland will be one of only 6 states that have no quantitative standards in place to ensure adequate networks.

SB 0929 addresses needed changes, specifically the bill:

- Ensures that carriers provide consumers with actionable and accurate information in their Provider Directories, and requires that carriers monitor their providers to ensure they wish to remain in networks.
- Requires that carriers file an adequacy plan for the review and approval of the Insurance Commissioner who would base their approval on quantitative standards of network adequacy.

We ask your support for Senate Bill 0929 and urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Linda B. Kolko
President



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House Bill 1318 – Health Insurance – Network Access Standards and Provider Network Directories House Health and Government Operations Committee February 25, 2016 SUPPORT

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning one of the important priorities of the **Woman's Democratic Club of Montgomery County (WDC)** for the 2016 legislative session. WDC is the largest and most active Democratic Club in the County with over 400 members (both men and women). Through our newly formed Advocacy Committee, we are keeping our members informed about upcoming legislation and advocating in support of legislation that addresses our priorities.

WDC urges the passage of House Bill 1318 – Health Insurance – Network Access Standards and Provider Network Directories. This bill will correct serious deficiencies in the CRISP Provider Directory used by Maryland Health Connection, and help ensure that patients can access providers without undue wait times or lengthy travel.

Studies sponsored by the Mental Health Association of Maryland and the Maryland Women's Coalition for Health Care Reform Network found that the CRISP Provider Directory available to purchasers of health insurance on Maryland Health Connection had serious errors and deficiencies. Consumers rely on this information to select health plans with providers and facilities they know in the stated network. When those providers turn out not to be in the network or no longer take patients, consumers must go to elsewhere often incurring significant additional cost to go to out of network providers for needed care. Consumers often feel cheated as they picked a specific plan based on the directory. In addition, many networks do not have an adequate number of providers in some specialties, especially behavioral health and crisis centers. Without this bill, In 2017 Maryland will be one of only 6 states that have no quantitative standards in place to ensure adequate networks.

HB 1318 addresses needed changes, specifically the bill:

- Ensures that carriers provide consumers with actionable and accurate information in their Provider Directories, and requires that carriers monitor their providers to ensure they wish to remain in networks.
- Requires that carriers file an adequacy plan for the review and approval of the Insurance Commissioner who would base their approval on quantitative standards of network adequacy.

We ask your support for House Bill 1318 and urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Linda B. Kolko
President



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Senate Bill 0607 – Agriculture – Cattle, Swine, and Poultry – Use of Antimicrobial Drugs Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee March 1, 2016 SUPPORT

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning one of the important priorities of the **Woman's Democratic Club of Montgomery County** (WDC) for the 2016 legislative session. WDC is the largest and most active Democratic Club in the County with over 400 members (both men and women).

WDC urges the passage of Senate Bill 0607 – Agriculture – Cattle, Swine, and Poultry – Use of Antimicrobial Drugs. The overuse of medically important antibiotics in healthy animals to promote growth has allowed pathogens to adapt so that these drugs have become less effective in treating critical infections in humans.

70% of the antibiotics that are medically important to humans are sold in the U.S. for livestock use, mainly for use to raise cattle, swine and poultry in large farms. Most of these antibiotics are being given to healthy animals to promote growth, not to treat illness.

Each year over 2 million people in the U.S. contract infections that are resistant to antibiotics with 23,000 dying because their infections cannot be treated with an effective antibiotic. The U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention has said "Up to half of antibiotic use in humans and much of antibiotic use in animals is unnecessary and inappropriate and **makes everyone less safe.**"

The antibiotics drug resistant infection issue has a major impact on women who have to learn the proper use of antibiotics when infections happen to their children and families. Equally important, they want to be able to select meat for their families that is raised without antibiotics and is not contributing to the problem. Several club members have had family members who got these antibiotic resistant infections. One's husband required several surgeries to remove it followed by months of multiple antibiotics. Another's daughter got the infection after a C-section and required months of different antibiotics all while nursing a newborn.

SB 0607 addresses needed changes. Specifically the bill:

- Allows the use of antibiotics to treat sick animals and control disease outbreaks
- Requires veterinarian oversight when antibiotics are administered
- Bans the use of medically important antibiotics in food-producing animals
- Requires the collection of data about antibiotic administration to track progress

We ask your support for Senate Bill 0607 and urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Linda B. Kolko, President

117 SHERMAN AVE + TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912

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House Bill 0829 – Agriculture – Cattle, Swine, and Poultry – Use of Antimicrobial Drugs House Environment and Transportation Committee March 2, 2016 SUPPORT

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning one of the important priorities of the **Woman's Democratic Club of Montgomery County** (WDC) for the 2016 legislative session. WDC is the largest and most active Democratic Club in the County with over 400 members (both men and women).

WDC urges the passage of House Bill 0829 – Agriculture – Cattle, Swine, and Poultry – Use of Antimicrobial Drugs. The overuse of medically important antibiotics in healthy animals to promote growth has allowed pathogens to adapt so that these drugs have become less effective in treating critical infections in humans.

70% of the antibiotics that are medically important to humans are sold in the U.S. for livestock use, mainly for use to raise cattle, swine and poultry in large farms. Most of these antibiotics are being given to healthy animals to promote growth, not to treat illness.

Each year over 2 million people in the U.S. contract infections that are resistant to antibiotics with 23,000 dying because their infections cannot be treated with an effective antibiotic. The U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention has said "Up to half of antibiotic use in humans and much of antibiotic use in animals is unnecessary and inappropriate and **makes everyone less safe.**"

The antibiotics drug resistant infection issue has a major impact on women who have to learn the proper use of antibiotics when infections happen to their children and families. Equally important, they want to be able to select meat for their families that is raised without antibiotics and is not contributing to the problem. Several club members have had family members who got these antibiotic resistant infections. One's husband required several surgeries to remove it followed by months of multiple antibiotics. Another's daughter got the infection after a C-section and required months of different antibiotics all while nursing a newborn.

HB 0829 addresses needed changes. Specifically the bill:

- Allows the use of antibiotics to treat sick animals and control disease outbreaks
- Requires veterinarian oversight when antibiotics are administered
- Bans the use of medically important antibiotics in food-producing animals
- Requires the collection of data about antibiotic administration to track progress

We ask your support for House Bill 0829 and urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Linda B. Kolko, President

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