

New Health Laws that will go into Effect October 1st

Every year, MedChi diligently monitors healthcare legislation within the Maryland General Assembly. Healthcare matters remain a primary focus for our legislators, and MedChi remains steadfast in its commitment to serve as a continuous resource for the General Assembly, advocating for the voices of physicians and patients across the state. What follows is an overview of health laws that were of interest to MedChi during the 2023 Legislative Session and will take effect on October 1st.

- Senate Bill 101/House Bill 48 concerns implementation and reimbursement in the Maryland Medical Assistance Program's Collaborative Care Model Services. The new law requires Medicaid reimbursement for behavioral health services delivered in primary care settings through the Collaborative Care Model.
- Senate Bill 581 establishes the Behavioral Health Value-Based Purchasing Pilot Program to provide person-centered, team-based services designed to assess and meet the needs of an individual with a behavioral health condition and help the individual navigate the healthcare system.
- Senate Bill 582/House Bill 1148 is an omnibus bill that deals with the Behavioral Health Model for Maryland and: (1) establishes a Commission on Behavioral Health Care Treatment and Access; (2) creates a Behavioral Health Care Coordination Value Based Purchasing Pilot Program; (3) extends for two years provisions relating to telehealth services; (4) requires the Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) to study and make recommendations regarding telehealth; and (5) requires the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to apply for federal grant funds and inclusion in the state certified community behavioral health clinic demonstration program.
- Senate Bill 460/House Bill 283 comes under the Trans Health Equity Act. It directly addresses the Medicaid Program gender-affirming treatment and requires the Medicaid Program to provide coverage for medically necessary gender-affirming treatment.
- Senate Bill 26/House Bill 111 requires MDH to establish an express lane eligibility program to enroll individuals in Medicaid and the Maryland Children's Health Program by January 1, 2025, based on eligibility findings by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.
- Senate Bill 188/House Bill 302 establishes a Rare Disease Advisory Council to enhance research and provide policy recommendations on matters related to individuals living with rare diseases in the State.
- Senate Bill 644 (Maternal Mortality Review Program – Local Teams) provides Baltimore City direct access to records within certain requirements in the Maternal Mortality Review Program.
- Senate Bill 678/House Bill 1151 requires that Medicaid, the Maryland Children's Health Program, and commercial health insurance carriers provide coverage for services rendered by a licensed pharmacist acting within the pharmacist's scope of practice to the same extent as services rendered by any other licensed health care providers. (Note: Commercial insurance changes take effect January 1, 2024.)

Please refer to the **Sine Die report** for further information on bills.

Gene Ransom III

CEO, MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society

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