Agenda Item 2

Proposed Policies for State Health Plan Chapter for Acute Psychiatric Services

Policy 1. People should be treated in the least restrictive setting appropriate to their medical conditions. Treatment in an outpatient setting is preferable to hospital-based treatment for long-term management. Hospitalizations should be reserved for individuals with an acute psychiatric condition who cannot be safely managed in the community.

Policy 2. An increase in the funding and provision of mental health services by the private sector and the government is necessary to adequately meet the needs of Maryland's population. The General Assembly, the Governor, the Department of Health, local government agencies, and health care facilities are encouraged to increase the capacity for mental health services in Maryland through funding community mental health resources.

Policy 3. Patients should be able to secure timely placement in a psychiatric bed when acute inpatient psychiatric services are required. Boarding of acute psychiatric patients that results in decompensation is unacceptable.

Policy 4. Acute psychiatric services shall be financially and geographically accessible whether patients are voluntary or involuntary. Facilities should increase their capacity to care for higher acuity patients and vulnerable patient populations to ensure adequate access for Maryland residents. Acute general and private psychiatric hospitals with licensed inpatient psychiatric units should admit involuntary patients,

Policy 5. Patients shall be timely discharged from hospitals once acute psychiatric services or other acute care services are no longer needed. Discharge delays result in an inefficient use of resources and potentially negatively affect access for other patients.

Policy 6. A hospital with acute psychiatric services will continuously and systematically work to improve the quality and safety of patient care. This includes planning, implementing, and optimizing the use of electronic health record systems, electronic health information exchange, and telehealth to provide high quality, cost effective, and patient centered care.