

**MARYLAND HEALTH CARE COMMISSION**

***UPDATE OF ACTIVITIES***

**March 2021**

***EXECUTIVE DIRECTION***

***Government Relations and Special Projects- Tracey DeShields***

**State Policy Update**

MHCC Legislative Policy Calls with Commissioners are being hosted as needed on Fridays at 8AM during the legislative session. Maryland Department of Health legislative meetings are held as needed on Mondays at 1:00 PM.

**MHCC-related news coverage and selected public health articles and commentary**

***Health Facilities and COVID19***

Robinson, L. "UM Upper Chesapeake health offers antibody treatments to reduce severe COVID-19 illness." WBAL TV 11. February 11, 2021. Available from: <https://www.wbaltv.com/article/antibody-treatments-at-upper-chesapeake-health-infusion-center-could-help-reduce-covid-19-illness/35483684>

University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center. "University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center as Circle of Honor Winner for the 2021 Minogue Awards for Patient Safety Innovation."

University of Maryland Medical System. February 8, 2021. Available from:

<https://www.umms.org/charles/news/2020/maryland-patient-safety-center-names-university-of-maryland-charles-regional-medical>

***COVID-19 Vaccine***

Wiseman, T. "UM UCH opens COVID-19 infusion center." Patch. February 10, 2021. Available from: <https://patch.com/maryland/belair/um-uch-opens-covid-19-infusion-center>

Wood, P. "Maryland lawmakers offered access to coronavirus vaccine in Annapolis." The Baltimore Sun. January 29, 2021. Available from: <https://www.baltimoresun.com/coronavirus/bs-md-lawmaker-vaccinations-20210129-xxnuxlcomfbgzegmglulp6wokyo-story.html>

Hackett, M. "Eliminating audio-only telehealth coverage could put safety net clinics at risk." Healthcare Finance. February 2, 2021. Available from: <https://www.healthcarefinancenews.com/news/eliminating-audio-only-telehealth-coverage-could-put-safety-net-clinics-risk>

***Health Departments***

Office of Governor Larry Hogan. "Governor Hogan announces \$123 million in additional funding for local health departments." Maryland.gov. February 4, 2021. Available from:

<https://governor.maryland.gov/2021/02/04/governor-hogan-announces-123-million-in-additional-funding-for-local-health-departments/>

Anderson, D. "Harford health officer stresses need for racial equity in COVID-19 vaccination rates." The Baltimore Sun. February 16, 2021. Available

from: <https://www.baltimoresun.com/maryland/harford/aegis/cng-ag-hcc-covid-forum-20210216-gwd7n2aorgkvblygpk43lx4om-story.html>

Miller, H and Mann, A. "Maryland health department using county 'compliance' and 'efficiency' to allocate COVID vaccine doses." The Baltimore Sun. February 10, 2021. Available from:

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/coronavirus/bs-pr-md-county-health-departments-allotment-20210210-lpxypkznxf55dn7ef6a6kcjti-story.html>

***Vaccine Equity***

Janney, E. "'Focus on equity' Vital in vaccine plan: Baltimore Mayor." Patch. February 5, 2021. Available from: <https://patch.com/maryland/baltimore/focus-equity-vital-vaccine-plan-baltimore-mayor>

Martin, M and Duncan J. “As vaccine access eludes many Black Americans, Baltimore groups mobilize to get shots into arms.” CBS News. February 23, 2021. Available from: [https://news.yahoo.com/vaccine-access-eludes-many-black-130635905.html?guccounter=1&guce\\_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce\\_referrer\\_sig=AQAAAAPBmMIeUTFwI3ntVJTWy9o\\_NUaubPNtMEowNokZpllj\\_-sjple3aq20YmIHq9BwKsnitU2Ijbh-uYIQ2NVqdZMuYDRU6AoGYoWa4gL2A93whJKNGwRwerrN0NLL6qWwkqz\\_1Z6Moc8CVM DQ1m65gHYxnWIX253sXKhA1EAGToPA](https://news.yahoo.com/vaccine-access-eludes-many-black-130635905.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAAPBmMIeUTFwI3ntVJTWy9o_NUaubPNtMEowNokZpllj_-sjple3aq20YmIHq9BwKsnitU2Ijbh-uYIQ2NVqdZMuYDRU6AoGYoWa4gL2A93whJKNGwRwerrN0NLL6qWwkqz_1Z6Moc8CVM DQ1m65gHYxnWIX253sXKhA1EAGToPA)

Mason, A. “Health data can help us close the cultural awareness and trust gaps exposed by COVID-19.” MedCity News. February 1, 2021. Available from: <https://medcitynews.com/2021/02/health-data-can-help-us-close-the-cultural-awareness-and-trust-gaps-exposed-by-covid-19/>

Office of Governor Larry Hogan. “Maryland Vaccine Equity Task Force to Partner with County Health Departments to Vaccinate Vulnerable Marylanders.” Maryland.gov. February 12, 2021. Available from: <https://governor.maryland.gov/2021/02/page/4/?cat=10>

Williams IV, JJ. “Morgan State dean researches how to help Black communities in Baltimore reduce health disparities.” The Baltimore Sun. February 22, 2021. Available from: <https://www.baltimoresun.com/features/newsmaker/bs-fe-newsmaker-sydnor-20210222-atusdsigprdbxkjr4hqmpwh5km-story.html>

Moses, L. “Baltimore City leaders call on Gov. Hogan to address inequities in COVID vaccine rollout.” Fox 5 News. February 2, 2021. Available from: <https://foxbaltimore.com/news/local/baltimore-city-leaders-call-on-gov-hogan-to-address-inequities-in-covid-vaccine-rollout>

Powers, K. “Prince George’s lags behind other Maryland counties in COVID-19 vaccine distribution.” ABC7 WJLA. February 17, 2021. Available from: <https://wjla.com/news/coronavirus-vaccine/prince-georges-maryland-counties-covid-19-distribution>

Cechini, H. “UMES hosts discussion on COVID-19 testing, vaccines disparities.” ABC47. February 18, 2021. Available from: <https://www.wmdt.com/2021/02/umes-hosts-discussion-on-covid-19-testing-vaccines-disparities/>

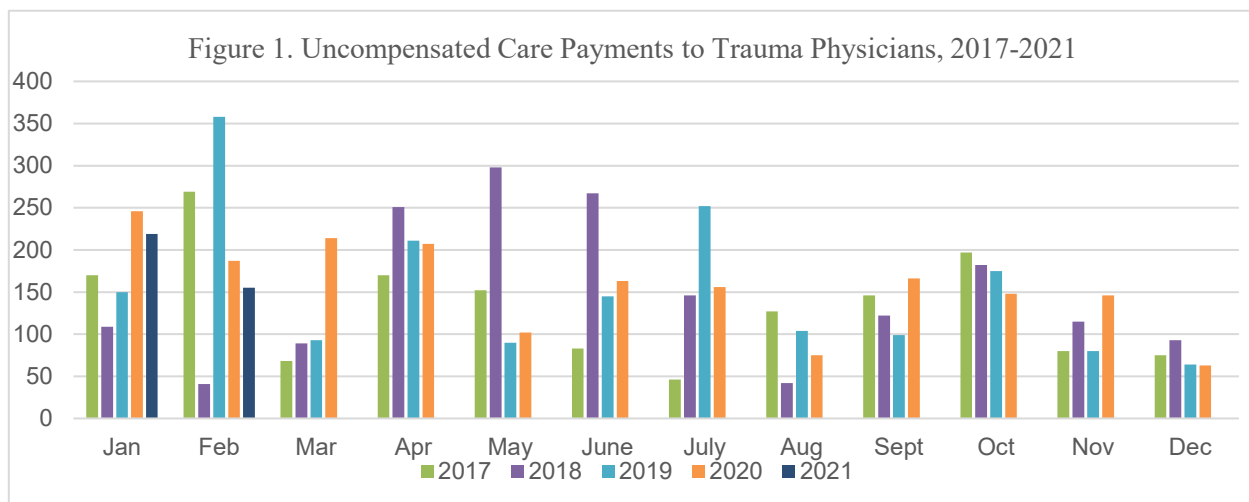
***Maryland Trauma Physician Services Fund***

**Uncompensated Care Processing**

Trustmark Health Benefits, the third-party administrator (TPA) for the Trauma Fund, processed \$155,217.34 for uncompensated care claims through February 2021.

**On-Call**

Staff also processed nearly all the on-call applications for July through December 2020. It is anticipated that once the final correction is submitted, reimbursements for this period will be approximately \$4.3 million.



**MHCC Website:** The MHCC website (<https://MHCC.maryland.gov>) had 6504 users in February.

**Wear The Cost:** During the month of February, the website traffic had an increase of 224%. A total of 6225 users visited the site. This continued increase in traffic resulted from the programmatic campaign tailored based on the findings of three months of research of Maryland residents' health information seeking behavior. Signify Health, the episode development contractor has completed the QC step the process and is moving into the normalization step.

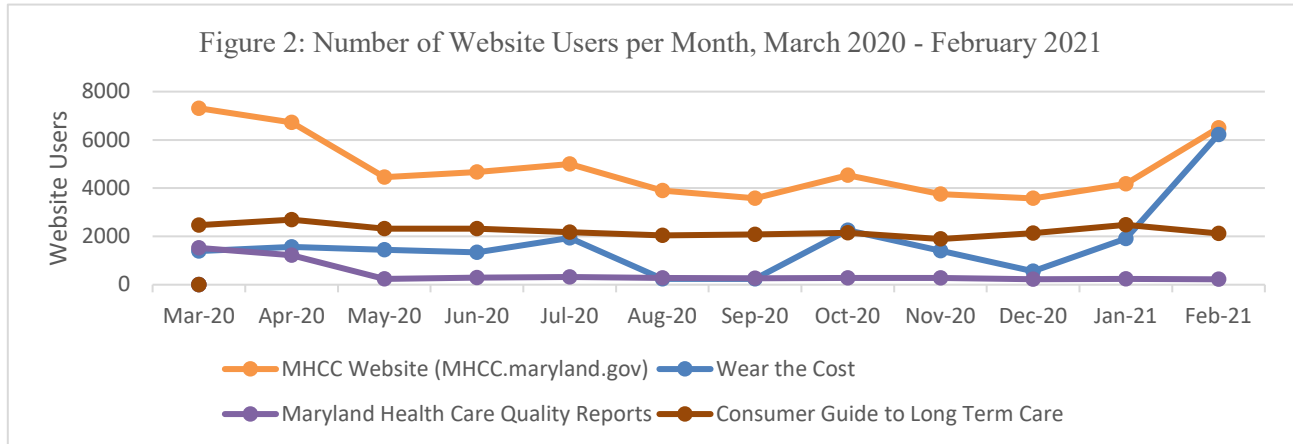


Figure 2 shows the number of website users over a 12-month period for each of the four websites maintained by Commission staff. Specific information about each website is below.

**Maryland Health Care Quality Reports:** The Maryland Health Care Quality Reports website had 224 users in the month of February which was similar to January 2021 website activity. The bounce rate decreased 3.0% and the average time on the website increased 24.3%, indicating increased user interest in website content. The primary source of website traffic are direct links (89.3%).

**Consumer Guide to Long Term Care:** For the month of February, the Consumer Guide to Long Term Care had 2,125 users access the site, which indicates a decrease of 10% in website traffic compared to January 2021. Compared to the month of February 2020, there is an 8% increase in user traffic to the Consumer Guide.

“Users” approximates the number of individuals that visit a website but contains some duplication of unique individuals visiting each website. For example, individuals are counted as separate "users" of a site when they use different devices (such as a work computer, a home computer, and a tablet), different browsers (such as chrome, safari, etc.), or clear cookies on a browser. Staff continue to monitor a broader set of metrics as they manage website projects and marketing.

***CENTER FOR ANALYSIS AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS***

***Cost and Quality Analysis– Shankar Mesta***

**MCDB Data Submission Status, Payor Compliance, and Technical Support**

**All payors submitted complete clean Q4 2020 data as of end of February 2021.**

Twenty-one (60%) of the Q4 2020 payor data successfully passed the Tier 3 data quality validation checks. Thirteen (37%) of the data submissions are under review. One payor has not made a submission to the MCDB. There is an improvement in the number of payors who have submitted clean data with completed

validated checks, a higher number of closed out submissions for Q4 2020 (60%) compared with (36.1%) for Q4 2019.

**MCDB Processing Tiers**

A payer submission must pass three validation modules called tiers before it is deemed a credible submission. Tier 1 is a basic validation that confirms a file conform in format and structure to requirements defined in the MHCC Submission Guide

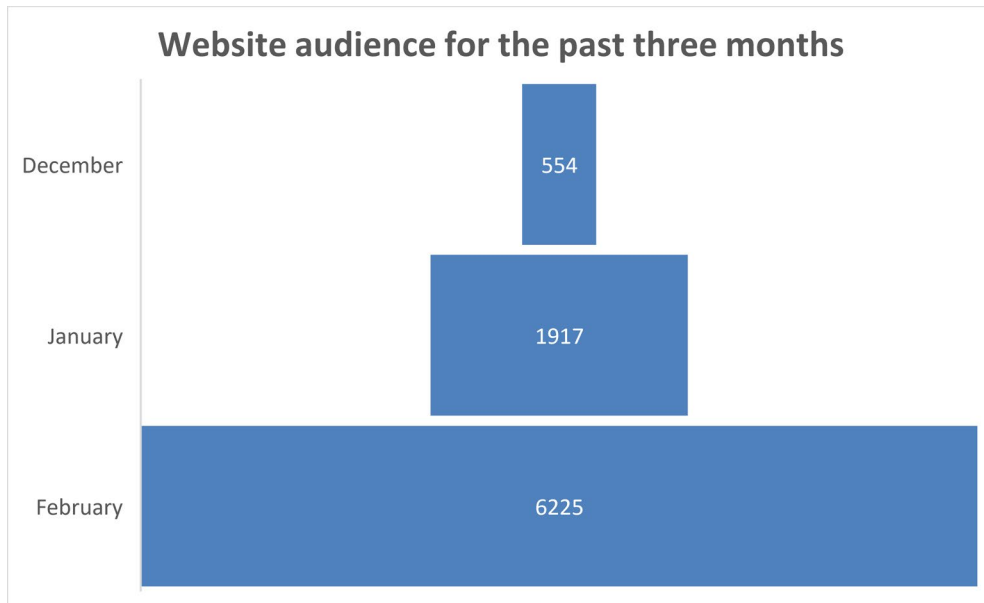
Tier 2 Validation ensures that a submission meets data integrity requirements and business rules thresholds. Numeric and date values are checked, duplicate records are flagged and required file linkages to the payer's member eligibility and the provider directory files are confirmed.

Tier 3 Validation applies trend analysis across a new and previous submission from the same payer. Validation detects such errors as an abnormal change in the volume or unusual change in payment for individual service are flagged and resolved.

A file that fails a Tier will undergo additional scrutiny and the payer's representatives may be questioned. If issues cannot be resolved, the submission will be rejected by the data base vendor.

**APCD Public Reporting and Data Release – Mahlet ‘Mahi’ Nigatu**  
**Wear The Cost**

During the month of February, the website traffic had an increase of 224%. A total of 6225 users visited the site. This continued increase in traffic resulted from the programmatic campaign tailored based on the findings of three months of research of Maryland residents' health information seeking behavior. Signify Health, the episode development contractor has completed the Quality Control process and is moving into the normalization step.



**Special Projects – Janet Ennis**

**Project Management Consulting Services: PMO Contract Award**

A Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued to continue the services of a Project Management Officer (PMO) to assist the Center and ensure all major projects remain on task and are completed timely. Seven proposals were received, and an Evaluation Committee was organized to conduct the review/selection process. The Evaluation Committee selected Freedman Healthcare, LLC for this new 2-year PMO contract. Staff awaits official approval from the Board of Public Works in late March before beginning work.

***CENTER FOR HEALTH CARE FACILITIES PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT***

***Acute Care Policy and Planning – Eileen Fleck***

**COMAR 10.24.21: State Health Plan for Facilities and Services: Acute Psychiatric Services**

On February 18, 2021, MHCC adopted proposed State Health Plan (SHP) regulations for acute psychiatric hospital services. These proposed regulations update portions of COMAR 10.24.07.

**COMAR 10.24.07: State Health Plan for Facilities and Services: Residential Treatment Center Services**

On February 18, 2021, the Commission, as an adjunct to its adoption of proposed SHP regulations for acute psychiatric hospital services (COMAR 10.24.21), adopted that portion of the existing COMAR 10.24.07 addressing residential treatment center services as proposed regulations.

**COMAR 10.24.11: State Health Plan for Facilities and Services: General Surgical Services**

A draft update of these SHP regulations was posted on the MHCC web site for informal review and comment on February 16, 2021. Comments will be accepted until March 8, 2021.

***Long Term Care Policy and Planning – Linda Cole***

**Minimum Data Set (MDS) and Long-Term Care Survey Data Set**

Staff reviewed and approved deliverables from Hilltop Institute at the University of Maryland Baltimore County, MHCC's contractor for work on the minimum data set and long-term care survey data set. Updated MDS files in a new format were obtained from MDH and Hilltop and Center. Staff is working with this new data to make it useful in further analysis. Routine reports using data from the Long-Term Care Survey, have been completed and submitted to MHCC Staff for review.

**Annual Hospice Survey**

Preparation is underway for the launch of the FY 2020 Maryland Hospice Survey, which is scheduled to begin on March 8, 2021. All hospices were surveyed to update contact information. The Hospice & Palliative Care Network of Maryland has been notified and has informed its members via its weekly newsletter.

**Home Health Agency (HHA) Utilization**

Staff has reviewed the preliminary HHA Utilization Tables for FY 2019. The 25 tables were developed from the data reported from all 54 licensed HHAs on the MHCC Annual Survey. Staff continues to follow-up with a few HHAs to verify utilization information as reflected in certain tables.

**FY 2019 Long Term Care Survey**

The FY 2019 Long Term Care Survey public use data is now available on the Commission's website. The occupancy reports, routine reports, and other data sets have been created and are available. Staff provided the

data for the consumer guide to the Center for Quality Measurement and Reporting. Staff has finalized the documents for publication in the *Maryland Register*.

Work is underway to review the current planning steps and deliverables in the contract for MDS and long term care planning to prepare a new Request for Proposal.

***Certificate of Need (“CON”) – Kevin McDonald***

**CON Letters of Intent**

**Luminis Health Doctors Community Medical Center – (Prince George’s County)**

Introduce adult psychiatric hospital services by creating a 16-bed in the former Magnolia Gardens Nursing Home, on the hospital campus.

**Hygea Detox, Inc. – (Baltimore County)**

Establish a 50-bed Track One alcoholism and drug abuse treatment intermediate care facility at 1210 Middle River Road in Baltimore (Baltimore County).

**Pre-Application Conference**

**Luminis Health Doctors Community Medical Center – (Prince George’s County)**

Introduce adult psychiatric hospital services by creating a 16-bed unit in the former Magnolia Gardens Nursing Home, on the hospital campus.

February 17, 2021

**Avenues Recovery Center of Chesapeake Bay, LLC – (Dorchester County)**

Establish a 50-bed Track One alcoholism and drug abuse treatment intermediate care facility at 821 Fieldcrest Road in Cambridge (Dorchester County).

February 17, 2021

**Request for a Change in an Approved CON**

**Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Southern Maryland, LLC, - (Prince George’s County) - Docket No. 18-16-2423**

An increase of \$6,962,312 in the approved cost of this CON, which authorizes establishment of a 60-bed special rehabilitation hospital.

**Determinations of Coverage**

• **Ambulatory Surgery Centers**

**Prince Frederick Surgery Center – (Calvert County)**

Acquisition of a 40% ownership share in this physician outpatient surgery center (POSC) by Surgical Center Development #4 LLC.

**The following POSCs were acquired by Kure Pain Newco, LLC (Damean Freas, D.O.)**

Bay Surgery Centers, LLC d/b/a Clearway Surgery Center of Annapolis, 116 Defense Highway, Suite 402, in Annapolis (Anne Arundel County)

Bay Surgery Centers, LLC d/b/a Clearway Surgery Center of Annapolis, 810 Bestgate Avenue, Suite 120, in Annapolis (Anne Arundel County)

Bay Surgery Centers-Glen Burnie, LLC d/b/a Clearway Surgery Center of Glen Burnie (Anne Arundel County)

Bay Surgery Center-Kent Island, LLC d/b/a Clearway Surgery Center of Kent Island (Queen Anne’s County)

Bay Surgery Centers-Waldorf LLC d/b/a Clearway Surgery Center of Waldorf (Charles County)

Clearway Surgery Center of Easton, LLC (Talbot County)

Clearway Surgery Center of Prince Frederick, LLC (Calvert County)

KureSmart Pain Management Surgery Center-Catonsville, LLC d/b/a Clearway Surgery Center of Catonsville (Baltimore County)  
KureSmart Pain Management Surgery Center-Columbia, LLC d/b/a Clearway Surgery Center of Columbia (Howard County)  
KureSmart Pain Management Surgery Center-Dundalk, LLC d/b/a Clearway Surgery Center of Dundalk (Baltimore County)  
SMART Pain Surgery Center at Germantown, LLC d/b/a Clearway Surgery Center of Germantown (Montgomery County)  
SMART Pain Surgery Center at Owings Mills, LLC d/b/a Clearway Surgery Center of Owings Mills (Baltimore County)  
SMART Pain Surgery Center at White Marsh, LLC d/b/a Clearway Surgery Center of White Marsh (Baltimore County)

- **Acquisition/Change of Ownership**

Chesapeake Woods Center (Dorchester County)

Acquisition of this comprehensive care facility (CCF) by CCGEN Holding II, LLC. The transaction is an indirect acquisition of the equity interest of the current real property owner, LGOHI Cambridge, LLC. While the equity interests of the real property will be acquired by CCGEN Holding II, LLC, the building in which the facility operates and the CON bed rights will continue to be owned by LG-OHI Cambridge, LLC, which will continue to lease the facility to the current operator and licensee of the CCF, 525 Glenburn Avenue Operations LLC.

Purchase Price: \$17,000,000

Loch Raven Center (Baltimore County)

Acquisition of this CCF by CCGEN Holding II, LLC. The transaction is an indirect acquisition of the equity interest of the current real property owner, LG-OHI 8720 Emge, LLC. While the real property will be acquired by CCGEN Holding II, LLC, the building in which the facility operates and the CON bed rights will continue to be owned by LG-OHI 8720 Emge, LLC, which will continue to lease the facility to the current operator and licensee of the CCF, 8720 Emge Road Operations LLC.

Purchase Price: \$19,600,000

Cromwell Center (Baltimore County)

Acquisition of this CCF by CCGEN Holding II, LLC. The transaction is an indirect acquisition of the equity interest of the current real property owner, LG-OHI 8710 Emge, LLC. While the real property will be acquired by CCGEN Holding II, LLC, the building in which the facility operates and the CON bed rights will continue to be owned by LG-OHI 8710 Emge, LLC, which will continue to lease the facility to the current operator and licensee of the CCF, 8710 Emge Road Operations LLC.

Purchase Price: \$23,000,000

Perring Parkway Center (Baltimore City)

Acquisition of this CCF by CCGEN Holding II, LLC. The transaction is an indirect acquisition of the equity interest of the current real property owner, LGOHI Wentworth, LLC. While real property will be acquired by CCGEN Holding II, LLC, the building in which the facility operates and the CON bed rights will continue to be owned by LG-OHI Wentworth, LLC, which will continue to lease the facility to the current operator and licensee of the CCF, 1801 Wentworth Road Operations LLC. There will be no changes to staffing, services, or bed complement.

Purchase Price: \$19,100,000

Spa Creek Center (Anne Arundel County)

Acquisition of the Spa Creek Center by CCGEN Holding II, LLC. The transaction is an indirect acquisition of the equity interest of the current real property owner, LG-OHI Annapolis, LLC. While the real property will be acquired by CCGEN Holding II, LLC, the building in which the facility operates and the CON bed rights will continue to be owned by LG-OHI Annapolis, LLC, which will continue to lease the facility to the current operator and licensee of the CCF, 35 Milkshake Lane Operations LLC.

Purchase Price: \$22,500,000

Catonsville Center (Baltimore County)

Acquisition of this CCF CCGEN Holdings II, LLC. The transaction is an indirect acquisition of the equity interest of the current real property owner, LG-OHI Catonsville, LLC. While the real property will be acquired by CCGEN II, LLC, the building in which the facility operates and the CON bed rights will continue to be owned by LG-OHI Catonsville, LLC, which will continue to lease the facility to the current operator and licensee of the CCF, 16 Fusting Avenue Operations LLC.

Purchase Price: \$23,600,000

Pending Notices of Acquisition/Change of Ownership for Comprehensive Care Facilities (Nursing Homes)

Five related notices only involving a change in the operating entity, not in the entity that owns the real property or the “bed rights:”

New Operating Entity

Chesapeake Woods Center (Dorchester County)

525 Glenburn Opco, LLC

Glade Valley Center (Frederick County)

Homewood Center (Baltimore City)

Long Green Center (Baltimore City)

Waugh Chapel Center (Anne Arundel County)

***CENTER FOR HEALTH INFORMATION & INNOVATIVE CARE DELIVERY***

**Health Information Technology Division – Nikki Majewski, Division Chief**

**Telehealth**

**Virtual Resource Center**

Staff is drafting two informational flyers to assist practices engage diverse patient populations in using telehealth. The flyers include best practices for building patient trust, offering technical support, and engaging caregivers. Planning is underway on a best practices flyer for creating sustainable telehealth programs and monitoring the effectiveness of telehealth after the Public Health Emergency (PHE) ends.

**Environmental Scan**

A provider questionnaire was developed to assess the use of telehealth before, during, and after the PHE, including benefits and challenges. The Maryland Primary Care Program (MDPCP), Maryland Psychiatric Society, and Maryland Chapter, American College of Cardiologists are assisting with data collection. Planning continues on an approach to assess telehealth awareness, use, and barriers among older adults.

**Policy Workgroup**

The draft general findings briefing document (document) was reviewed with select workgroup participants. The document overviews the evolving telehealth landscape in Maryland and the nation and includes leading observations from the workgroup. The document identifies benefits, unintended consequences, and permanency concerns for six telehealth policies deemed most relevant during the PHE.

**Study**

Staff is preparing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to identify a contractor to study the quality and cost of telehealth and its impact on access to care, alignment with new models of care, and consumer and provider satisfaction. Study components will be informed by House Bill 123/Senate Bill 3, *Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2021*, if passed by the Maryland General Assembly. The RFP is scheduled for release in the spring or

early summer. If the bill passes, a report is due to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Health and Government Operations Committee by December 1, 2022.

### **Webinars**

A telehealth webinar series is being planned that will include information to assist consumers in navigating in-person and virtual visits. Promotion continues for the school-based telehealth webinar, *Virtual Services Provided by School Nurses: Leveraging Technology to Meet Student Needs During COVID-19 and Beyond*. The webinar has generated more than 1,000 views on YouTube since January.

### **Hospital Health Information Technology Assessment**

Hospital responses to the annual health IT survey are being analyzed. The survey assesses hospitals' use and perceived value of electronic health record systems, health information exchange (HIE), and telehealth as well as social determinants of health screening and cybersecurity. An information brief is targeted for release in the spring.

### **Breaches**

An analysis of 2020 breach data obtained from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights is in progress. The analysis centers on breaches affecting at least 500 individuals in Maryland and several other states with similar hospital discharges and patient days. The approach will benchmark Maryland for breach occurrences, estimated records compromised, breach type, and covered entity type. A spotlight report is scheduled for release this spring.

### **Electronic Data Interchange**

An analysis of electronic data interchange (EDI) administrative savings using cost data for medical and dental claims nationally is underway. Staff is planning to work with certain private payers to develop initiatives aimed at increasing EDI. The draft annual EDI Progress Report (report) was developed and reviewed with several payers. COMAR 10.25.09, *Requirements for Payers to Designate Electronic Health Networks*, requires payers with premiums exceeding \$1 million per year to submit an annual report by June 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **Innovative Care Delivery Division – Melanie Cavaliere, Division Chief**

#### **Diffusing Telehealth in Ambulatory Practices**

State-Designated Management Service Organizations (MSOs) continue to support practices with telehealth implementation. Three MSOs were awarded a telehealth diffusion grant in April 2020. The MSOs help providers complete a telehealth readiness assessment, address identified gaps, restructure workflows, and understand payer use policies. Since April, about 214 practices have expressed interest in working with an MSO, 95 have implemented telehealth, and 69 have used the technology in care delivery.

#### **Advanced Care Delivery**

Development is proceeding on a grant aimed at expanding practice transformation in primary care and specialty practices. The grant funds one or more Care Transformation Organizations (CTOs) to help practices implement activities that place them on a trajectory to be in the best position to deliver value in the evolving care delivery and payment reform landscape. CTOs will work with practices to complete a readiness assessment, redesign workflows, and provide training using practice transformation tools developed by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Transforming Clinical Practice Initiative (TCPI).

#### **Oncology Care Model**

Exploratory activities are underway for the potential development of an oncology care model (model) that uses the national Oncology Care Model as a framework. The model is intended to promote coordinated, holistic oncology care for patients while reducing overall costs. Risk tracks, monthly population payments, and performance-based payments are expected to be included in the model.

#### **Maryland Primary Care Program Advisory Council**

The MDPCP Project Management Office (PMO) met with Staff to review feedback on the *Track 3 Policy Position Paper* (paper) from the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation (CMMI). In December, the PMO submitted the paper to CMMI for review. The Advisory Council (Council) convened about weekly during the last half of 2020 to deliberate on a framework for a Track 3. Feedback from CMMI highlights alignment and where further discussion with the PMO is required. The Council is expected to reconvene in the spring.

#### **Care Management**

A Care Management Program Development Guide (guide) is nearing completion. The guide will help practices assess their readiness to engage in care management, define a care manager's role in a practice, and identify

leading care manager responsibilities. A practice self-assessment and over 60 educational resources to help practices implement care management or adopt best practices to enhance an existing care management program are included in the guide.

### **Patient and Family Advisory Council**

Staff developed a database that includes information on acute care hospitals' Patient and Family Advisory Councils (PFACs). Progress continues an addendum to the *Patient and Family Advisory Council Guide for Ambulatory Practices*, which will provide best practices for facilitating PFACs during the PHE. A PFAC is a group of patients, families and practice staff who collaborate on ways to improve the patient experience and quality of care.

### **Learning Symposiums**

Preparations are underway for podiatrists' and ambulatory practices' learning events. A podiatric webinar scheduled in March will provide strategies to enhance cybersecurity in a podiatric practice. An ambulatory practices webinar is planned for April that will feature updates on the 2021 Quality Payment Program and highlight lessons learned from Maryland's participation in the national TCPI initiative.

### **Health Information Exchange Division – Alana Sutherland, Division Chief**

### **Dental Health IT**

Data analysis is underway of the 2020 dental health IT adoption environmental scan. Nearly 200 dentists provided information on the use of health IT. The findings will inform strategies aimed at increasing health IT adoption among dentists. An information brief is targeted for release in the spring. Health IT presentations are scheduled to the Patuxent Dental Society for March and the Baltimore County Dental Society in April.

### **Privacy and Security Regulations**

Post & Schell, P.C. (contractor) completed a review of the *21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act: Interoperability, Information Blocking, and the ONC Health IT Certification (CA) program final rule*. The contractor identified elements in the CA to modernize COMAR 10.25.18.03, *Health Information Exchanges: Privacy and Security of Protected Health Information* (regulations). Last July, the contractor was selected to propose changes to update and align the regulations with existing federal HIE policies.

### **Awareness Building**

Staff is developing an outreach strategy aimed at increasing consumer awareness of HIE and identifying the benefits of electronic health information on quality and safety. A literature review is in progress to identify information on blockchain technology, benefits, and opportunities, to enhance privacy and security of electronic health information. This information will be used to build stakeholder awareness of potential uses in health IT.

## ***CENTER FOR QUALITY MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING***

*The Maryland Health Care Quality Reports (MHCQR) website*

### **MHCQR Website Redesign**

Staff is working with Advanta Government Services (AGS), the website contractor, to redesign the website's functionality, usability, and overall appeal. The first phase of the redesign effort focused on the full integration of our Long Term Care Guide and our Quick Compare features into a more uniform and comprehensive *Quality Reports* consumer site. The website is in the final stages of development; Commissioners will have access to preview the site prior to the launch in late March 2021.

### **MHCQR website sees steady website traffic**

Staff continues to monitor traffic to the site using Google Analytics software. Web traffic in February 2021 was similar to web traffic in January 2021. The most frequently viewed pages on the MHCQR site include hospital quality ratings and the nursing home search feature. Traffic to the site is presented graphically under the Executive Direction section of this update.

### **Website Promotion: Approximately 65 social media posts initiated in February**

There were approximately 65 social media posts made in February. Topics included National Wise Health Care Consumer Month, American Heart Month, and general marketing posts for the MHCQR. These topics generally coincide with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Health Observances or other important health related events and are designed to link readers back to the MHCQR website.

Staff met with representatives from Maryland Public Television (MPT) to discuss options for increasing public awareness of the MHCQR website. MHCC will establish an interagency agreement with MPT to support marketing and promotion of the website after the ‘soft launch’ of the site in late March.

### **Hospital Quality Initiatives – Courtney Carta**

#### **Healthcare Associated Infections**

All Maryland acute care hospitals are required to report healthcare associated infections to the CDC’s National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN). MHCC publicly reports this data annually on the MHCQR consumer website. MHCC postponed public reporting for 2019 & 2020 data due to the pandemic. Staff is working with the industry to develop an appropriate timeline to begin reporting this data again.

#### **Specialized Cardiac Services Data**

All Maryland hospitals that provide PCI services are required to participate in the ACC NCDR CathPCI data registries and report quarterly data and detailed reports to the Commission in accordance with established timelines. Report collection for 2020Q3 CathPCI is complete. The first quarterly cardiac data coordinators meeting of 2021 occurred on February 9, 2021. Discussion points included data registry updates, a case study, and a question-and-answer session. The next meeting is scheduled for May 11, 2021.

### **Long Term Care Quality Initiative—Stacy Howes**

#### **Inter-Center and Inter-Agency Projects**

*Center for Health Care Facilities Planning and Development:* Yearly, Staff create hospice usage tables based on the Hospice Survey. These tables depict the general usage rates, racial composition of hospice patients, most common ailments of hospice patients, non-death discharge rates, and rates of usage by region of Maryland. Tables are shared with the hospice industry and posted on the MHCC website. Tables for FY2019 are in the process of being created and will be complete once the 2019 Vital Statics Report is published.

Staff is working with Center for Health Care Facilities Planning and Development to analyze the effects of nursing home acquisition on quality. Staff will examine the quality reports of nursing homes before and after acquisition to determine if quality is stable, decreases, or increases in the three year period after acquisition.

#### **Nursing Home Family Experience of Care Survey**

The data collection period for 2020 is complete. Data collection has been extended for a longer period compared to previous years because the project encountered multiple problems with mail delivery from August 2020 through January 2021. We have achieved a response rate of 40%, which is comparable to last year’s response rate. Data analysis will begin in early March and conclude by mid- to late-March. Nursing homes will receive their reports in late March or early April. All individual reports and the state report will be posted on our consumer website by early May.

### **Health Plan Quality Initiative**

Staff kicked off the 2021 rate year in December of 2020. Health plans have begun collecting data, and data collection will continue through the end of the summer. Behavioral health data are due in April.

### **Consumer Guide to Long Term Care**

Data updates to the Consumer Guide have been suspended during the integration to the redesigned Quality Reports website. Staff continue to provide information and resources directly to consumers who contact the office with questions about long term care facilities and services.

#### *Nursing Home and Assisted Living Influenza Vaccination Survey*

Staff is preparing the 2020-2021 electronic survey for release to facilities in early April 2021.

### **Outpatient Quality Initiative—Mariama Gondo**

#### *Administering CY 2019 Ambulatory Surgical Facility (ASF) Annual Survey*

The CY2019 survey opened on November 16, 2020. The survey officially closed on January 29, 2021 and Staff is working on the review of results and reaching out to ASFs to facilitate accurate and complete reporting. Staff surveyed 322 ASFs for the 2019 reporting period. Staff will have data available for the public use data set next month.

### **Health Disparities Initiative—Diana Estefanía Estrada Alamo**

#### *Performing Analyses Regarding Race and Ethnicity Using Hospital Discharge Dataset*

The current Consumer Website has hospital discharge data available for consumers to review and stratify by hospital, payer, and characteristics of patients. Staff will stratify the hospital discharges by race and ethnicity for the top 25 APR-DRG codes (by volume) in the state. These data will be ranked by race and ethnicity. Staff will analyze variations in case volume by race and ethnicity to identify issues of access to care and elevated prevalence of treatable conditions.