

MARYLAND HEALTH CARE COMMISSION

UPDATE OF ACTIVITIES

April 2023

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

Government Relations and Special Project – Tracey DeShields

State Policy Update

Almost done! The 2023 legislative session is working hard to finish their work. The legislative session ends on Monday April 10th at 11:59 PM.

We continue to follow the passage or failure of bills introduced in the General Assembly that impact our work.

We had a few bill hearings that we weighed in on. The bills listed below had bill hearings and are currently working their way through the Senate and the House:

- 1) *SB283/HB418 - Mental Health - Workforce Development - Fund Established - Letter of Support;*
- 2) *SB493/HB675 - Commission to Study Trauma Center Funding in Maryland – Support;*
- 3) *SB509/HB702 - Health Care Facilities - Nursing Homes - Acquisitions and Licensure – Support w/Amendments;*
- 4) *SB582/HB1148 - Behavioral Health Care - Treatment and Access (Behavioral Health Model for Maryland)- Support;*
- 5) *SB534 Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2023 – Support;*
- 6) *SB387/HB274 -Task Force on Reducing Emergency Department Wait Times – Support w/Amendments;*
- 7) *SB648/HB786 - Electronic Health Networks and Electronic Medical Records - Nursing Homes - Release of Records – Support; and*
- 8) *SB786/HB812 - Health - Reproductive Health Services - Protected Information and Insurance Requirements.*

The bills we did not take a position on we are tracking. We continue monitoring the happenings of the legislative session.

MHCC-related news coverage: selected articles and commentary

Health Care Facilities

Taylor, M., *Top 5 nursing homes by state, per Newsweek*, March 20th, 2023

<https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/post-acute/top-5-nursing-homes-by-state-per-newsweek.html>

Wintrode, B. and Wood, P., *“Lawmakers seek oversight of state nursing homes, including troubled veterans home,”* March 29, 2023, The Baltimore Banner

<https://www.thebaltimorebanner.com/politics-power/state-government/nursing-home-oversight-ECWTTACVUJECROHCMGKOISBOYM/>

Cass, A., *“10 recent hospital lawsuits, settlements,”* April 5th, 2023, Becker’s Hospital Review

<https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/legal-regulatory-issues/10-recent-hospital-lawsuits-settlements-3.html>

Healthcare Data and Technology

News, *“Why a Data Exchange Platform Is Vital to Healthcare Interoperability,”* March 30, 2023, HER Intelligence.

<https://ehrintelligence.com/news/why-a-data-exchange-platform-is-vital-to-healthcare-interoperability>

“Florence Launches Modern Healthcare Experience With \$20M Seed Round Led by Thrive Capital, GV, and Salesforce Ventures,” April 3, 2023, Healthcare IT News

<https://www.healthcareittoday.com/2023/04/03/florence-launches-modern-healthcare-experience-with-20m-seed-round-led-by-thrive-capital-gv-and-salesforce-ventures/>

Medicaid

Hogan, J., *“General Assembly expands Medicaid coverage for gender-affirming care,”* March 30, 2023, The Daily Record.

<https://thedailyrecord.com/2023/03/30/general-assembly-expands-medicaid-coverage-for-gender-affirming-care/>

Maryland Primary Care Program

Hut, N. *“Maryland’s all-inclusive population health payment model continues to show promise, but nonhospital spending poses a concern,”* March 31, 2023, Healthcare Financial Management.

<https://www.hfma.org/payment-reimbursement-and-managed-care/payment-models/marylands-population-health-payment-model-for-providers-continues-to-show-promise/>

Long-Term Care

Maucione, Scott, *“Study: Lack of ‘living wage’ exacerbates labor shortages for some of Maryland’s health care workers,”* April 3, 2023, WYPR - 88.1 FM Baltimore.

<https://www.wypr.org/wypr-news/2023-04-03/study-lack-of-living-wage-exacerbates-labor-shortages-for-some-of-marylands-health-care-workers.>

“Nursing Home Alternatives to Consider,” April 4, 2023, U.S. News & World Report

<https://wtop.com/news/2023/04/nursing-home-alternatives-to-consider/>

Best Nursing Homes in 2022-2023, April 2023, US News and World Reports

<https://health.usnews.com/best-nursing-homes>

Behavioral Health

Higgins II, D. M., *“Maryland Congressman Secures Federal Funding for Behavioral Health Unit at MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital,”* April 5, 2023, The Southern Maryland Chronicle.

<https://southernmarylandchronicle.com/2023/04/05/maryland-congressman-secures-federal-funding-for-behavioral-health-unit-at-medstar-st-marys-hospital/>

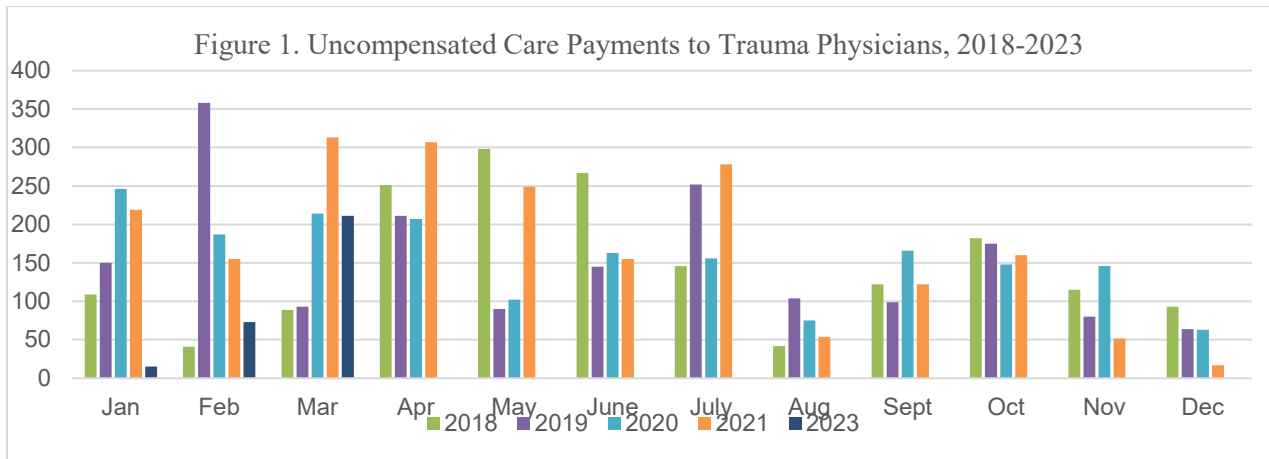
Daily Record Staff, *“Luminis Health opens inpatient psychiatric unit in Prince George’s County,”* April 5, 2023, Maryland Daily Record

<https://thedailyrecord.com/2023/04/05/luminis-health-opens-inpatient-psychiatric-unit-in-prince-georges-county/>

Maryland Trauma Physician Services Fund

Uncompensated Care Processing

Trustmark Health Benefits, the third-party administrator (TPA) for the Trauma Fund, processed \$210,857.22 uncompensated care claims through March 2023.



MHCC Website: The MHCC website (<https://MHCC.maryland.gov>) had 5,198 users in the month of March 2023.

Wear The Cost

In March 2023, 257 users visited the site.

Maryland Quality Reporting

The Maryland Quality Reporting had 3,174 users, 3,922 sessions, and 5,793 pageviews in March. The average session duration was 1 minute and 9 seconds. Website activity increased by 10-20% for nearly all metrics.

The site received the most website referrals from MHCC’s homepage (56.3%). The website also had referrals from Maryland 211, GovDelivery (new Quality Corner newsletter), Maryland Attorney General, Maryland State Archives, A Place for Mom, and St. Josephs.

Facebook remains the primary social media referral source, accounting for 100% of all social referrals. This month Facebook sessions nearly quadrupled from the previous month (an increase from 33 sessions in February to 125 sessions in March). The team attributes this increase to the successful Patient Safety Awareness Week campaign collaboration with the Maryland Department of Aging and Maryland Patient Safety Center.

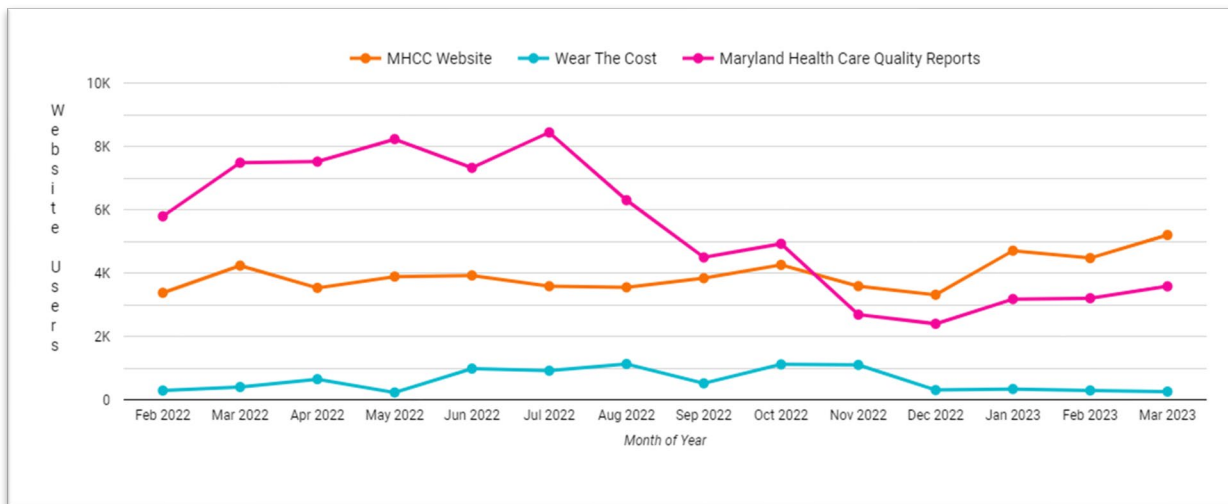


Figure 2. shows the number of website users over a 12-month period for each of the three websites maintained by Commission staff. Specific information about each website is listed above.

CENTER FOR ANALYSIS AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

APCD Public Reporting and Data Release – Mahlet Konjit-Solomon ‘Mahi’

Wear The Cost

Wear the Cost is a consumer-centric website that provides price transparency information on elective surgeries. The website was launched in 2017 and has undergone four successful releases. The Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) has been in the process of releasing the fifth cycle of data when faced with contractual issues that took over a year to resolve. This report provides an update on the progress made since the resolution of the contractual issues.

Contractual Issues

After over a year of contractual issues, a new contractor was issued with Change Health Care at the beginning of this year and a data management plan was put in place in March 2023. Onpoint, MHCC's contractor, is currently preparing the extract based on the data specification provided by the new contractor, Change Health Care (CHC). CHC will begin processing the data in May 2023. The new data will include both Commercial and Medicaid, with Medicaid being added for the first time. The data will cover the years 2020-2021.

Website Update

The website is tentatively scheduled to be updated in September or October of this year, with the addition of the new data. The website will continue to provide consumers with price and quality information on elective surgeries.

Website Communication

Web traffic for the month of March was 243, slightly lower than the prior month. However, it is important to note that the strategic communication efforts have intentionally slowed down as there is no new data to be added to the website yet. Despite this, \$500 has been spent on ads to keep traffic going to the website, and social media engagement has continued at a slower pace.

MCDB Data Release

Application Submission and Review Process

As part of the enhancement, MHCC has chosen the Jotform application to automate the application submission and review process. The application will handle the submission of applications, the review process workflow, which includes the completeness review done by the CAIS staff before passing it on to the Data Release Advisory Committee (DRAC) for the review of the application for approval or disapproval. The Jotform application has been chosen for its ease of use and functionality. The application allows for seamless submission of applications, and its workflow feature streamlines the review process, allowing for a more efficient and effective review process. The MHCC will continue to monitor and evaluate the JotForm to ensure that it is meeting the Data Release process goals and ease of process.

Website Update

MHCC has updated the Data Release section of its website to provide better clarity and transparency to applicants and the public. The updates include the inclusion of instructions on how to submit an application for both non-governmental and governmental applicants. The website update also includes a fee structure for all available data, providing applicants with a clear understanding of the cost associated with accessing data. Additionally, a section has been added to show the applications currently in process under the transparency requirement of COMAR 10.25.05.

Current Applications

The Executive Director has accepted the recommendation of the DRAC and has approved two applications. Both applicants have completed the data fee payment, and the Data Use Agreement has been executed. The applicants and the corresponding project titles are:

Applicant	Project Title	Fees	Status
Hadi Kharrazi, Center for Population Health IT, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health	Advancing Maryland's Statewide Suicide Data Warehouse to Improve Individual and Population-level Mortality Prediction and Prevention	Application Fee \$200 Data Fee \$96,000	Request: Approved Data Fee: paid. Data release: In progress
Sara Gross, JD, Baltimore City Law Department	Assessing the Extent of Opioid Epidemic in Baltimore City	Application Fee \$200 Data Fee \$162,000	Request: Approved. Data Fee: Paid.

Special Projects – Janet Ennis

Project Management Consulting Services

The current PMO contract with Freedman Healthcare, LLC was scheduled to expire on March 31, 2023. With nominal funds remaining on that contract, staff will issue a contract extension request to the Board of Public Works (BPW) requesting an additional \$160,000 for six more months. The request will be addressed at the May 17, 2023, BPW meeting. Meanwhile, staff is in the process of drafting a new multi-year Request for Proposals (RFP) to contract with a PMO to fulfill organization-wide support services related to ongoing APCD expansion and enhancements; implementing and analyzing a non-claim-based payment initiative; implementing the primary care investment initiative; and implementing reporting efforts on health care cost and utilization data, and other report writing.

CENTER FOR HEALTH CARE FACILITIES PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Acute Care Policy and Planning – Eileen Fleck

Certificates of Ongoing Performance for Percutaneous Coronary Intervention

The Commission approved Certificates of Ongoing Performance for three hospital cardiac surgery programs at its meeting of March 16, 2023. The programs at University of Maryland Medical Center (Docket No. 22-24-CP036); University of Maryland St. Joseph Medical Center (Docket No. 22-24-CP038); and MedStar Union Memorial (Docket No. 22-24-CP035) received certification for the next four years.

Long-Term Care Policy and Planning – Linda Cole

Prevalence of Palliative Care in Maryland Survey

Under contract with SEA Healthcare and with Tenacity as a subcontractor, work is underway on a palliative care survey designed to identify gaps in the provision of palliative care services as required under HB 378. Beta testing was conducted at the four healthcare settings selected: hospitals; nursing homes; home health agencies; and hospices. Data collection started on February 24th; the deadline for data submission was extended until March 31st.

FY 2022 Hospice Survey

The FY 2022 Maryland Hospice Survey launched on March 1, 2023. All hospice providers were notified on February 21st of the availability of the online survey and required due dates for submission of data. Part I of the Hospice Survey is due by May 1st.

NASHP Award

Maryland was one of six states selected for the National Academy of State Health Policy’s (NASHP) Institute to Improve Care for People with Serious Illness. NASHP will provide technical assistance to aid Maryland in implementing recommendations to expand the provision of palliative care services. The kick-off meeting for this grant was held on March 21st.

Long-Term Care Survey

Staff completed the cleaning phase of FY 2021 Maryland Long Term Care Survey data. This includes the creation of public use files, and other reports including the occupancy reports, technical notes, and reports for the *Maryland Register*. The data will be posted to the Commission’s website.

Certificate of Need (“CON”) – Wynee Hawk

CON’s Withdrawn

MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center – (Baltimore County) - Docket No.: 17-03-2406

MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center, in partnership with MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute, seeks to establish a liver transplant program at MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center in Rosedale, Maryland.

CON Applications Filed

Hope Health Psychiatric Hospital – Matter No. 23-03-2465

Establish a 16-bed psychiatric hospital for children and adolescents to be located at 1726 Whitehead Road, Woodlawn.

Proposed Cost: \$1,365,000

First Use Approval

Adventist Home Health Services – (Carroll County) – Docket No. 22-06-2456

Adventist Home Health Services, Inc., an existing Maryland home health agency (Maryland license HH7032), located at 12041 Bournefield Way, Suite B, Silver Spring, Maryland (Montgomery County) was awarded a Certificate of Need to expand home health agency services into Carroll County. Adventist Home Health Services, Inc. will provide skilled nursing services, home health aide services, occupational therapy, speech/language therapy, physical therapy, and medical social services.

Approved Cost: \$94,345

Determinations of Coverage

- **Ambulatory Surgery Centers**

District Surgery Center, LLC - (Montgomery County)

Establish an ambulatory surgery center (ASC) with 2 sterile operating rooms and 1 non-sterile procedure room to be located at 6720A Rockledge Drive Suite500.

Ownership Interest: The proposed ASC will be owned by the following persons and percentages:

District Surgery Center, LLC will be owned by Capital Surgical Solutions, LLC (15%)

Capital Surgical Solutions, LLC 15.0%

Ten physicians (8.5% ownership interest for each physician):

Matthew Buchanan, M.D. 8.5%

Asheesh Gupta, M.D. 8.5%

Paymaun Lotfi, M.D. 8.5%

Wylie Lowery, M.D. 8.5%

Ronald Paik, M.D. 8.5%

Cyrus Press, M.D. 8.5%
Cassie Root, M.D. 8.5%
Hajeer Sabet, M.D. 8.5%
Owolabi Shonuga, M.D. 8.5%
Colvin Wellborn, M.D. 8.5%
The owners of Capital Surgical Solutions, LLC are identified as Basheer Alismail and Benjamin Stein, M.D.
Asheesh Gupta, M.D., is identified as President of District Surgery Center, LLC.

- **Acquisition/Change of Ownership**

Capital Caring Health License #H1541 (Montgomery and Prince George’s County)

Acquisition by Chapters Health System Inc. (Chapters) of Capital Caring Health (CCH), a hospice that serves two jurisdictions, Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties. The acquisition is anticipated to occur on April 1, 2023. No cash purchase price. Chapters has extended interim loan financing to Capital Hospice and made other non-cash purchase price commitments.

- **Licensure**

- **Delicensure of Bed Capacity or a Health Care Facility**

Sacred Heart Home – (Prince George’s County)

Three-month extension of temporary delicensure of fifty-eight (58) comprehensive care facility (CCF) beds at Sacred Heart Home (SHH), while retaining the beds in the Commission’s nursing home bed inventory for the facility. This extension will have an effective date of April 12, 2023, which is when the current temporary delicensure period expires.

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

No Outstanding requests at this time.

CENTER FOR QUALITY MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING

The Maryland Quality Reporting (MQR) website

MQR Website Updates

Staff continue to work with Advanta Government Services (AGS), the website contractor, to update the newly redesigned website. The most recent refresh includes updates to the urgent care inventory, assisted living facility directory and hospital profile pages. Additional enhancements and updated features are underway and routine updates and maintenance are ongoing. Staff continue to respond to consumer inquiries received via the quality reports email.

MQR Website Traffic

Staff monitors traffic to the consumer site using Google Analytics software. Website traffic was slightly higher in March (3,174) compared to February (2,806 users). The most frequently viewed topics on the MQR site include assisted living, nursing homes, and hospital price transparency. Traffic to the site is presented graphically under the Executive Direction section of this update.

MQR Website Promotion

There were approximately 80 social media posts in March. Topics included Patient Safety Awareness Week, National Kidney Month, Women’s History Month, and general promotional posts for the MQR website. 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 MQR website. Staff also promote the MQR website using additional social media platforms such as LinkedIn and NextDoor.

The first issue of the MHCC Quality Corner newsletter was published in mid-March. The newsletter featured an interview with Dr. Blair Eig, President and CEO of the Maryland Patient Safety Center in honor of Patient Safety Awareness Week and other relevant information about quality-related topics. The newsletter reached over 1600 users and the website saw an increase in use correlated to the release date. The newsletter will be released quarterly to connect with consumers, the industry, and highlight important work that’s being done in Maryland to improve quality healthcare.

Hospital Quality Initiatives – Courtney Carta

HCAHPS Data Collection

Patient satisfaction measures across Maryland hospitals have remained historically lower than national averages. MHCC requires acute care hospitals to submit detailed-level Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) data. Staff have begun preliminary analysis to identify potential differences in patient satisfaction across race, ethnicity, and service lines (e.g., maternity, surgical, medical) and continue to collaborate with other agencies and organizations towards statewide improvement.

Long Term Care and Health Plan Quality Initiatives—Stacy Howes

Nursing Home Family Experience of Care Survey

Data collection for the 2022 survey is complete as of February 24, and the contractor has begun data analysis. The final response rate was 31%, which is slightly lower than last year’s response rate of 32%. Several new initiatives were piloted this year to increase the response rate. All respondents received a \$5 gift card for their participation, participants were emailed a link to the survey if we had an email for them, and email reminders were sent.

This year is the last year of the contractor’s (Market Decisions) contract, and an RFP was released requesting proposals. Staff have received proposals and the selection process is nearing completion.

Health Care Worker Influenza Vaccination Survey (Nursing Homes, Assisted Living, Home Health, and Hospice)

Data collection for the 2022-2023 flu season is complete for all long-term care facilities. The hospice and home health results were released for completion the week of April 3, and the nursing home and assisted living survey results will be released the week of April 16.

Assisted Living Quality Analysis SB531 Workgroup

SB531 requires the MHCC to conduct an analysis of the quality of care in assisted living (AL) facilities with fewer than 10 beds. A survey was emailed to all assisted living facilities to ask them about what they see as barriers to providing quality care. Staff received 232 responses, and the survey revealed that providers are primarily concerned with not having enough money, not having enough qualified staff, and lacking training in how to navigate the regulatory system. The 4th workgroup meeting was held on March 27. The meeting agenda included follow-up presentations from OHCQ and Medicaid as well as preliminary discussion of workgroup recommendations for the report to the legislature.

Nursing Home and Sub Acute Center Utilization Tables

Nursing home utilization tables are constructed annually using the minimum data set (MDS) data. The tables display information about nursing home use rates by patient characteristics (gender, age and race/ethnicity), facility characteristics (bed size, for profit/non-profit) and jurisdiction. All tables have been constructed and have been posted to the MHCC main site and the Quality Reporting site.

Health Plan Quality Initiatives

Data collection for the 2022 measurement year is ongoing.

Outpatient Quality Initiative—Mariama Simmons

Outpatient Quality Initiative

No new updates.

Health Equity Initiative

No new updates.