

# **MARYLAND HEALTH CARE COMMISSION**

## ***UPDATE OF ACTIVITIES***

**February 2022**

### ***EXECUTIVE DIRECTION***

#### **Government Relations and Special Project – Tracey DeShields**

##### **State Policy Update**

The 2022 legislative session began on January 12, 2022. All legislative briefings and hearings will be held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. On February 14, 2022, the Senate will transition to in-person briefings and hearings for all committees and subcommittees.

MHCC Legislative Policy Calls with commissioners will be held as needed on Thursdays at 8am during the legislative session. Maryland Department of Health legislative meetings will be held as needed on Mondays at 9am.

MHCC has two bills this legislative session: SB 253/HB 353 Maryland Health Care Commission – User Fee Assessments and HB 213 Health Information Exchanges – Definition and Privacy Regulations. SB 253 had a bill hearing on January 26th. Ben Steffen testified on the need for MHCC to increase user assessment fees. HB 213 is scheduled for a bill hearing on February 2nd.

##### **MHCC-related news coverage: selected articles and commentary**

###### ***Legislation***

Collins, D. “Health Care Heroes Act would permanently address health care staffing shortages.” WBALTV 11. January 21, 2022. Available from: <https://www.wbalTV.com/article/health-care-heroes-act-maryland-introduction/38848704#>

Press Release. “Governor Hogan enacts Executive Order to further expand health care staffing in hospitals, nursing homes, and pharmacies.” The Office of Governor Larry Hogan. January 24, 2022. Available from: <https://governor.maryland.gov/2022/01/24/governor-hogan-enacts-executive-order-to-further-expand-health-care-staffing-in-hospitals-nursing-homes-and-pharmacies/>

###### ***Health Facilities***

Cohen, D. “You can’t really manufacture doctors and nurses that don’t exist.” Politico. January 2, 2022. Available from: <https://www.politico.com/news/2022/01/02/hogan-health-care-covid-maryland-526361>

Dempsey, T. “Crisis standards of care: U. Md. Capital Region Health makes changes amid surge in COVID-19 cases.” MSN. January 1, 2022. Available from: <https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/medical/crisis-standards-of-care-u-md-capital-region-health-makes-changes-amid-surge-in-covid-19-cases/ar-AASldGU>

Greenfield, S. “Meritus Health implements crisis standard of care due to surge in COVID-19 cases.” Herald-Mail Media. January 14, 2022. Available from:

<https://www.heraldmillmedia.com/story/news/2022/01/14/meritus-health-crisis-care-due-surge-omicron-covid-19/6532103001/>

Maryland Department of Health. “Maryland Department of Health received three-year, \$1.1 million CDC grant to address maternal mortality statewide.” Maryland Department of Health. January 5, 2022. Available from: [https://health.maryland.gov/newsroom/Pages/Maryland-Department-of-Health-receives-three-year,-\\$1-1-million-CDC-grant-to-address-maternal-mortality-statewide.aspx](https://health.maryland.gov/newsroom/Pages/Maryland-Department-of-Health-receives-three-year,-$1-1-million-CDC-grant-to-address-maternal-mortality-statewide.aspx)

MedStar Health. “President of MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center, MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital to retire.” MedStar Health News. January 6, 2022. Available from: <https://www.medstarhealth.org/news-and-publications/news/president-of-medstar-southern-maryland-hospital-center-to-retire#:~:text=%E2%80%93Christine%20R.,retiring%20on%20January%2028%2C%202022.>

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital. “MedStar Health welcomes new president of MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center, Dr. Stephen T. Michaels.” Southern Maryland Chronicle. January 30, 2022. Available from: <https://southernmarylandchronicle.com/2022/01/30/medstar-health-welcomes-new-president-of-medstar-southern-maryland-hospital-center-dr-stephen-t-michaels/>

Montcalmo, C. “Maryland Department of Health announces \$15 million in emergency funding to support Adult Medical Day Care Centers.” Nottingham MD. January 4, 2022. Available from: <https://www.nottinghammd.com/2022/01/05/maryland-department-of-health-announces-15-million-in-emergency-funding-to-support-adult-medical-day-care-centers/>

Verner, B. “Healthcare workers out of work due to Maryland Nursing Board issues.” WMAR2 Baltimore. January 20, 2022. Available from: <https://www.wmar2news.com/news/local-news/healthcare-workers-out-of-work-due-to-maryland-nursing-board-issues>

WBAL. “Howard County General Hospital implements crisis standards of care protocols amid COVID-19.” WBALTV 11. January 4, 2022. Available from: <https://www.wbaltv.com/article/howard-county-general-hospital-crisis-standards-of-care/38667226>

**Health Disparities and Health Equity**

Pasia, N. “Johns Hopkins, local health departments seek over \$42 million for underserved communities.” State of Reform. January 6, 2022. Available from: <https://stateofreform.com/news/maryland/2022/01/johns-hopkins-local-health-departments-seek-over-42-million-for-underserved-communities/>

Pasia, N. “Maryland health organizations share vision for equitable, community-based care.” State of Reform. January 24, 2022. Available from: <https://stateofreform.com/news/maryland/2022/01/maryland-health-organizations-share-visions-for-equitable-community-based-care/>

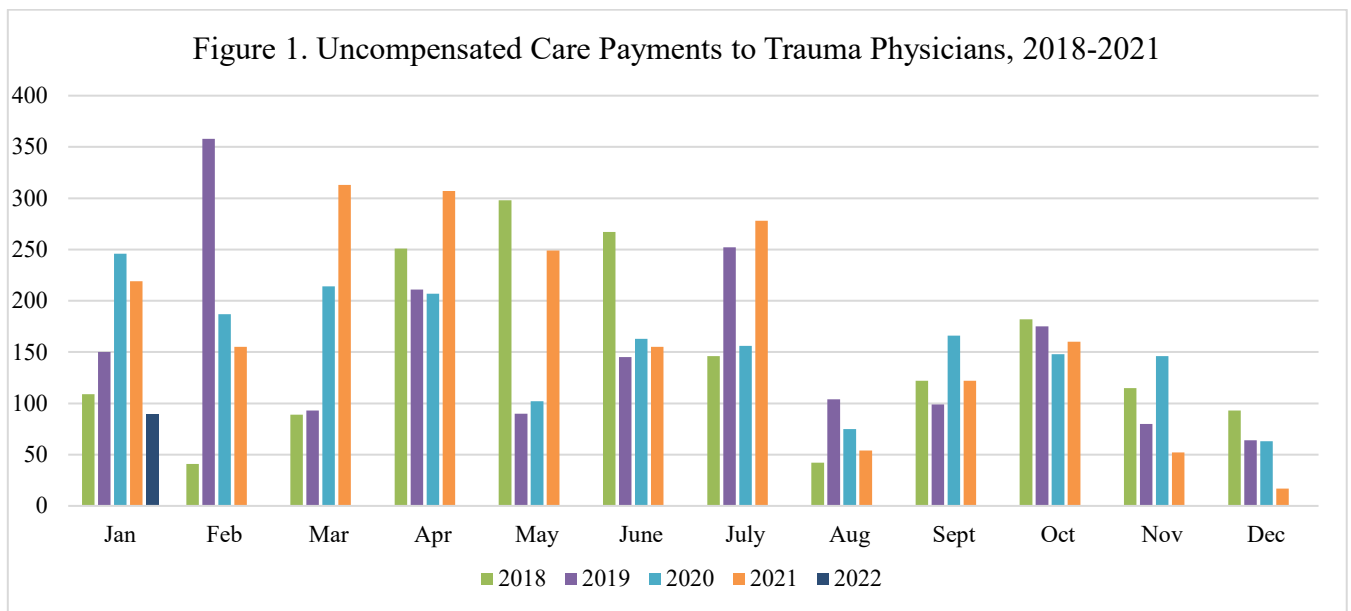
**Healthcare Cybersecurity**

Thompson S, et al. “Maryland health workers, lawmakers want answers as problems persist a month after cyberattack.” The Washington Post. January 8, 2022. Available from: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2022/01/08/cyberattack-still-disrupting-maryland-department-of-health/>

**Maryland Trauma Physician Services Fund**

**Uncompensated Care Processing**

Trustmark Health Benefits, the third-party administrator (TPA) for the Trauma Fund, processed \$89,616.61 uncompensated care claims through January 2022.



**MHCC Website:** The MHCC website (<https://MHCC.maryland.gov>) had 2,836 users in the month of January 2022.

**Wear The Cost**

In January 2022, 269 users visited the site.

**Maryland Quality Reporting**

The Maryland Quality Reporting site had 1,886 users, 2,616 sessions and 3,972 pageviews in January. The average session duration was 1 minute and 47 seconds. The site receives the most website referrals from MHCC’s homepage (65.4%).

Facebook continues to be the primary referral social media source, accounting for 77.6% of all social referrals and Twitter was the second highest source of social media referrals for the month, accounting for 14.3% of referrals. LinkedIn provided the least social media referrals accounting for 6.1% of referrals. There was a significant increase in referrals from social media sites this month (49 in January versus 17 in December).

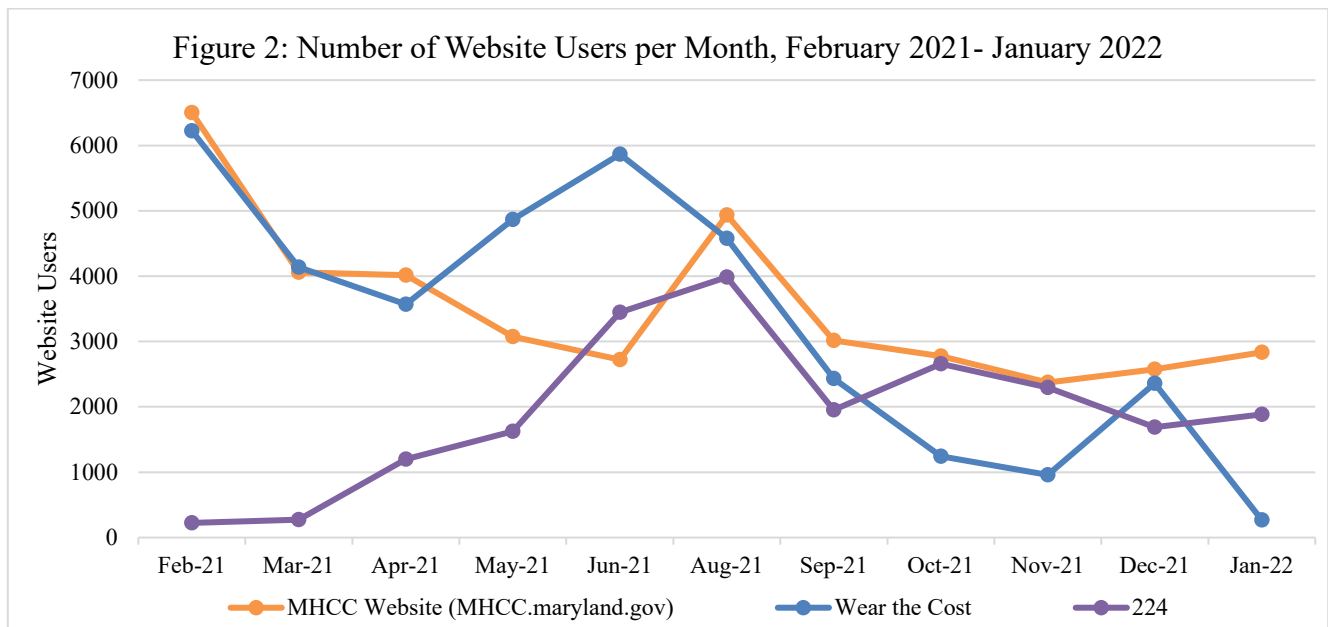


Figure 2 shows the number of website users over a 12-month period for each of the four websites maintained by Commission staff. Specific information about each website is below.

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

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

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

At the end of January 2022, eight (23%) payors submitted Q4 2021 data through the new Onpoint portal. The Q4 2021 data must be submitted by February 28, 2022. The fact that about 25% of payors had already met the submission deadline is a positive sign.

To facilitate a smooth data transition, Onpoint is regularly engaging with payors to submit test data and provide feedback to ensure that payors can submit clean 2021Q4 data before the deadline. On strength that

Onpoint brings to Maryland is longstanding relationships with many of the national payors including Aetna, CIGNA, Humana, Kaiser, and United HealthCare.

### **New Supplementary Pharmacy Database Contractor for Maryland’s Medical Care Data Base**

CAIS sought to provide actionable information for policy development regarding prescription drugs by supplementing pharmacy data with price and therapeutic classification in MHCC’s MCDB. This information intends to promote prescription drug price transparency and support other ad hoc analyses requested by the Commission or its stakeholders. The previous multum drug database did not contain mutually exclusive drug classification components or comprehensive price data for each drug. MHCC issued a bid invitation to procure a supplemental database that would help the commission to supplement pharmacy data with drug price and classification. UpToDate, Inc. (UpToDate) was the only vendor that submitted a proposal. MHCC has chosen UpToDate, Inc. (UpToDate) as its next supplementary pharmacy database vendor under a new three-year contract beginning in January 2022. UpToDate was selected to provide supplementing pharmacy database, Medispan, with current and historical drug prices, drug descriptions, classification of drugs as generic vs. brand, and therapeutic grouping of drugs. Medispan will be able to provide unique hierarchical therapeutic classification systems to identify drug products.

UpToDate, Inc. is wholly owned by Wolters Kluwer Health, Inc. a US-based company that is owned by Wolters Kluwer N.V. is headquartered at Zuidpoelsingel 2, Alphen aan den Rijn, The Netherlands. Wolters Kluwer (WKL) is a global leader in professional information, software solutions, and services for the health, tax & accounting, governance, risk & compliance, and legal & regulatory sectors.

MHCC, Onpoint, and UpToDate will collaborate over the next several weeks to ensure a smooth implementation of the Medispan drug database.

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

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

#### **Certificates of Ongoing Performance**

MHCC staff received submissions from five hospitals addressing the hospitals’ compliance with conditions on their Certificates of Ongoing Performance for percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) services. These five hospitals are Adventist HealthCare White Oak Medical Center, Meritus Medical Center, Suburban Hospital, University of Maryland Capital Region Medical Center, and UPMC Western Maryland. Each of the hospitals has demonstrated compliance with the conditions for its certification.

#### **Impact of Volume/Mortality Relationship - PCI**

The Cardiac Services Advisory Committee met on January 18, 2022 to review and discuss the analysis of the volume/mortality relationship for STEMI and non-STEMI PCI in Maryland, as undertaken by Advanta Government Services, an MHCC contractor. Following feedback from the Committee, MHCC staff is considering the additional analysis of the American College of Cardiology’s National Cardiovascular Data Registry for CathPCI data set, collected from Maryland hospitals for the period of calendar years 2015 through 2019. AGS has agreed to do additional analysis within the remaining contract budget and period.

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

**Request for Proposals – Minimum Data Set (MDS) and Long-Term Care Survey**

The draft RFP was submitted to the Maryland Department of General Services for its review on January 11, 2022. Staff expects to have this RFP ready for distribution and posting soon.

**Hospice**

The FY 2020 Maryland Hospice Survey has been completed, and the public use data set will be posted on the Commission’s website after cleanup of the survey response is complete. Work is also underway on the FY 2021 Maryland Hospice Survey, which is planned for a March launch.

*Certificate of Need – Wynne Hawk*

**Determinations of Coverage**

- **Ambulatory Surgery Centers**

Baltimore Surgery Center, LLC – (Baltimore City)

Establish an ambulatory surgical center with one sterile operating room to be located at 3421 Benson Avenue, in Baltimore. The center will be dedicated to the provision of dental services. The owner of the proposed center in New Core Healthcare.

Green Springs Station IVF Surgery Center – (Baltimore County)

Establish an ambulatory surgical center with one sterile operating room and one non-sterile procedure room to be located at 10755 Falls Road, Suite, 110b, in Lutherville. The owner of the proposed center is Johns Hopkins Surgery Centers Series (JHSCS), which is jointly and equally owned by The Johns Hopkins University and The Johns Hopkins Health System Corporation. The proposed center will specialize in providing in vitro fertilization services.

Glen Echo Surgery Center, LLC – (Montgomery County)

Introduction of pain management services and a new practitioner, John Dombrowski, M.D.

- **Acquisition/Change of Ownership**

Brighton Gardens of Tuckerman Lane – (Montgomery County)

Acquisition of this comprehensive care facility (CCF). Currently the land, building, and related assets are owned by SJV 1 Tuckerman Lane LLC. Post-transaction, these assets will be owned by Tuckerman Property LLC. The bed rights are currently owned by SJV 1 Tuckerman Lane OpCo LLC. Post transaction, they will be owned by Tuckerman Property LLC. The operator of the facility is currently SJV 1 Tuckerman Lane OpCo LLC and after the transaction, the new operator will be Tuckerman Operator LLC.

Purchase Price: \$7,840,000

Frederick Health & Rehabilitation Center – (Frederick County)

Acquisition of this CCF. Currently the land, building, and related assets are owned by GPH Frederick LLC, and this will not change. The bed rights are currently owned by North Place Operating Company. Post-transaction, they will be owned by Frederick Health and Rehabilitation, LLC. The operator of the facility is currently North Place Operating Company. Post-transaction, the new operator will be Frederick Health and Rehabilitation, LLC.

Purchase Price: \$1.00 Ownership of the real estate is not changing hands. The licensed operator, the lessee of the real assets, is changing.

Montgomery Village Health Care Center – (Montgomery County)

Acquisition of this CCF. Currently the land, building, and related assets are owned by 19301 Watkins Mill Road, LLC and the bed rights are owned by 19301 Watkins Mill Road Operating Company, the operator of the facility. Post-transaction, the real property and bed rights will be owned by Montgomery Realty, LLC. Montgomery Operator, LLC will operate the facility.

Purchase Price: \$13,174,469

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

Ravenwood Nursing Care Center – (Washington County)

Transaction: Acquisition of the Assets

Current Owner of the Real Property, owner of the bed rights and operator of the facility: Diakon Lutheran Senior Living, Maryland, LLC

Owner post-transaction:

Owner of the real property and beds rights: 1183 Luther Drive, LLC

Operator of the facility: Creekside SNF Operating Company, LLC

Purchase Price: \$15,850,000

Additional information: Pending. Additional information has been requested by MHCC

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

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

**Telehealth Study**

Recruitment activities are underway to identify consumers to participate in virtual interviews regarding their experiences and perceptions of audio-only and audio-video technologies. Completion of about 80 interviews is targeted for March. Outreach to provider organizations seeking their help in promoting awareness of the provider telehealth survey was conducted. Chapters 70 and 71 of the 2021 Laws of Maryland (LOM), *Preserve Telehealth Access of 2021*, requires MHCC to develop recommendations on coverage and reimbursement for audio-only and audio-video by December 1, 2022.

**Public Service Announcement**

A telehealth Public Service Announcement (PSA) was developed and approximately 14 radio stations statewide are planning to broadcast the PSA. The PSA encourages residents to practice COVID-19 safety measures, promotes vaccines and boosters, and recommends consideration of telehealth as an alternative to in-person visits with a health care provider.

**Patient Generated Health Data**

Development is advancing on a flyer highlighting privacy and security considerations for providers seeking to incorporate patient generated health data (PGHD) into care management. The flyer will overview the applicability of HIPAA and feature ways to engage patients using direct-to-consumer health technologies (e.g., smartwatches). In addition, research activities continue on the capture, use, and sharing of patient generated health data (PGHD) in care delivery. Findings will be used to inform development of a PGHD information brief.

**Health Equity**

Drafting is progressing on a telehealth flyer aimed at using audio-video technology to improve access to care for underserved populations. Findings from an analysis of the Area Deprivation Index (ADI) data will guide

development of strategies to engage providers in areas with higher ADI scores. ADI is a publicly available neighborhood-level measure of socioeconomic disadvantage.

### **Hospital Assessment**

Health IT questions are being pretested with select hospitals for the 2022 *Hospital Health Information Technology Survey* (survey). Several questions have been added to the survey that inquire about hospital use of EHR-based screening tools for health-related social needs (e.g., transportation, housing instability, etc.) and integration of PGHD into EHRs. The survey is targeted for distribution in early spring.

### **Nursing Home Assessment**

An analysis of nursing home responses to health IT questions from MHCC's Annual Long Term Care Survey (survey) and interviews with several nursing home representatives was completed. Drafting of an insights brief is underway that overviews value of health IT in supporting care delivery and includes key perspectives from nursing home representatives. Draft health IT questions for the 2022 survey were vetted with select nursing homes.

### **Cybersecurity Webinar**

The cyber liability webinar application for continuing medical education credits is under review by MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi). The webinar will feature two presenters who will discuss cybersecurity risk management and key considerations when evaluating cyber liability insurance. The webinar is scheduled to occur on February 18<sup>th</sup>.

### **Electronic Data Interchange**

Preparations are underway to distribute the 2022 Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) Progress Report. Annually, payers with a premium volume greater than \$1 million report administrative health care transactions census data as required by COMAR 10.25.09, *Requirements for Payers to Designate Electronic Health Networks*. The EDI Progress Report will be distributed in March to about 40 payers that meet the reporting threshold.

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

### **Advanced Care Delivery**

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

The Maryland Primary Care Program (MDPCP) Advisory Council convened to discuss the Track 3 proposal (proposal) submitted to the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation (CMMI). Discussions centered on recent changes to the proposal to align it with the Federal Primary Care First model. The MDPCP Program Management Office overviewed the *2020 MDPCP Annual Report* released in December 2021. The report highlights accomplishments and outcomes for year two of the program.

#### ***MDPCP Tutorial***

Development of an MDPCP educational tutorial (tutorial) is underway. The tutorial consists of nine modules that feature select elements of the program (i.e., Tracks, benefits to providers and consumers, and payment design). Modules are designed as standalone sessions that can be viewed based on interest and sequenced according to user preference. The tutorial is targeted to be available on MHCC's website in April.

#### ***Practice Transformation Grant Activities***

Practice transformation screening activities are progressing for nearly 65 practices that applied to participate in the *Advancing Practice Transformation in Ambulatory Practices* program. The grantee, MedChi Care Transformation Organization (CTO) is assessing practices using the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Transforming Clinical Practice Initiative Readiness Assessment. The CTO, in consultation with staff, will use the results to select participating practices.

### ***Health Equity Practice Roundtable***

Preparations are underway to convene a health equity practice roundtable. Practices serving areas with higher ADI scores will be invited to share their perspectives on addressing health equity challenges in their medical neighborhood. Findings will be used to inform strategies aimed at increasing awareness of health equity challenges, and in developing best practice guidance for practices. The roundtable is planned for March.

### **Learning Networks**

Staff convened the final webinar in a three-part Innovative Care Symposium series aimed at overviewing value-based care (VBC) delivery models. The webinar included presentations from CMMI; CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield; and a physician expert in VBC. The session was convened in collaboration with the Health Services Cost Review Commission and MedChi.

### **Electronic Health Network Workgroup**

The Electronic Health Network (EHN) Workgroup (workgroup) convened to discuss implementing Chapter 790 (House Bill 1022) and 791 (Senate Bill 748) of the 2021 LOM. The law requires MHCC certified EHNs to submit administrative health care transactions originating from a Maryland-based provider to the State-Designated health information exchange (CRISP) for public health and clinical purposes. The workgroup is expected to meet several times to finalize its implementation recommendations.

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

### **Privacy and Security Regulations**

The Health Information Exchange (HIE) Policy Board (workgroup) continued deliberations on draft modifications to COMAR 10.25.18, Health Information Exchanges: Privacy and Security of Protected Health Information, (regulations) proposed by Post & Schell, P.C (contractor). The workgroup convened to review draft modifications to sections .04-.06 of the regulations. Staff reviewed workgroup comments to proposed changes to sections .06 through .12. The workgroup is scheduled to reconvene in February.

### **Consumer Consent Management**

Several HIEs operating in Maryland and CRISP were convened to discuss challenges and solutions to implementing a consumer consent management utility (CMU). Development of a CMU is required under Chapter 798 (House Bill 1375) Health Information Exchanges – Electronic Health Information – Sharing and Disclosure of the 2021 LOM. Solutions identified will inform further development of the CMU technical specifications.

### **HIE Roundtable Symposium**

A virtual national HIE roundtable (roundtable) event was held with HIE and state health IT leaders. Participants discussed HIE governance and State oversight roles aimed at advancing HIE. The roundtable was developed in collaboration with Civitas Networks for Health, a national HIE association. A second roundtable is scheduled for February 28<sup>th</sup> that will focus on HIE as a data utility.

## ***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. Routine updates and maintenance are ongoing. The next major update is in

progress and will include refreshed data for hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies, and price transparency information.

### **MQR Website Traffic**

Staff monitors traffic to the consumer site using Google Analytics software. Website traffic was higher in January (1,886 users) compared to the previous month (1,688 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**

Promotion of the MQR website is a Center priority. There were approximately 80 social media posts in January. Topics included Cervical Cancer Awareness Month, Glaucoma Awareness 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.

Staff also continue to work with Maryland Public Television (MPT) on a promotional campaign to increase public awareness of the MQR website. The first of three flights of the media campaign (television and radio ads) will launch in late February and last through mid-March. Digital, social media, and print advertising will begin in early February and will continue through August.

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

### **HCAHPS Data Collection**

Patient satisfaction measures across Maryland hospitals have remained historically lower than national averages. Starting in January 2022, MHCC began requiring acute care hospitals to submit detailed Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) data. This will allow for a more thorough analysis of potential differences in patient satisfaction across race, ethnicity, and service lines (e.g., maternity, surgical, medical). The initial round of data collection was completed successfully, and initial analysis is underway. Quarterly data collection will continue.

## ***Long Term Care and Health Plan Quality Initiatives—Stacy Howes***

### **Long Term Care Planning Guide**

HB599 was passed in Spring 2021, and it required MHCC to create a Long-Term Care Planning Guide for Maryland residents. The Long-Term Care Planning Toolkit section of the Quality Reporting website has been updated to include a Long-Term Care Planning Guide (brochure) in both English and Spanish. A copy of the guide has been included in your commission packets.

### **Home Health Utilization Data**

Using data collected by the Health Planning and Development Center (for home health agencies), utilization tables were constructed to understand the race, gender, and age distribution of residents throughout the state. Tables were posted on the provider side of the Quality Reporting site and the main MHCC site.

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

Data collection for 2021 is complete, and data analysis and report generation are in process. Results will be available soon and presented at a Commission meeting in the spring.

At a past Commission meeting, staff presented the results of the 2020 survey, and initial analyses indicated that non-white respondents were less satisfied with care than white respondents and respondents using Medicaid were less satisfied with care than respondents paying privately. A multivariate analysis was used to further explain the association between these variables and satisfaction. Using multiple linear regression using nested models, our contractor Market Decisions, examined the effect of race (white versus non-white),

payment source (Medicaid versus private/other pay), ownership type (for-profit versus not-for-profit), and size of nursing home on overall nursing home satisfaction. In addition to these variables of interest, several demographics and nursing home characteristics were entered as covariates. The outcome variable was overall satisfaction with the nursing home which was measured on a scale of 1 (least satisfied) to 10 (most satisfied).

White residents provided statistically significantly higher satisfaction scores compared to non-whites, and those in not-for-profit homes provide statistically significantly higher satisfaction scores compared to those in for profit homes. Payment source, ownership type, and size of nursing home are so intertwined, it is difficult to identify which variable is the true predictor because 92% of those using Medicaid live in larger nursing homes ( $\geq 81$  beds), and 77% of those using Medicaid live in for-profit nursing homes. Specifically, of those in larger nursing homes and using Medicaid, 78% are in for-profit nursing homes. It is most likely that these three variables work together to influence satisfaction with the nursing home.

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

No new updates. Data collection is ongoing for nursing homes, assisted living facilities, home health agencies, and hospices.

### **Health Plan Quality Initiative**

The new Request for Proposals is complete and should be posted in February. The current contractor, HealthData Company, has submitted a new Scope of Work to continue data collection for CY2021.

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

### **Outpatient Quality Initiative**

Staff has begun working on various application updates to enhance the survey application in preparation for the 2021 reporting year for freestanding ambulatory surgical facilities. There was a moratorium on reporting for the 2020 reporting year due to the COVID pandemic.

### **Health Disparities Initiative**

In response to House Bill 309/Senate Bill 565, the Commission worked in collaboration with the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities (OMHHD) to write and submit a report to the legislature. The report was shared with the Department of Health Senior Leadership for their review and to send it forward to the legislature. Staff continues to work on completion of the various program summaries as they are the building blocks for establishing a catalog (inventory) of programs that serve vulnerable populations.