

MARYLAND HEALTH CARE COMMISSION

UPDATE OF ACTIVITIES

September 2022

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

Government Relations and Special Project – Tracey DeShields

State Policy Update

MHCC staff continues to develop studies and workgroups required by bills passed in the 2022 legislative session.

MHCC-related news coverage: selected articles and commentary

Health Facilities

MedStar Public Affairs. “MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center receives “High Performing” ratings from US News and World Report.” August 22, 2022. The Enquirer Gazette. Available from:

https://www.somdnews.com/enquirer_gazette/news/briefs/medstar-southern-maryland-hospital-center-receives-high-performing-ratings-from-u-s-news-world-report/article_ccd70b01-497b-54e1-bf34-37c7764fa52c.html

Pasia, N. “MHA releases extensive report with recommendations to combat workforce shortage.” August 11, 2022. State of Reform. Available from: <https://stateofreform.com/news/maryland/2022/08/mha-releases-extensive-report-with-recommendations-to-combat-workforce-shortage/>

UnitedHealth Group. “UnitedHealthcare donates \$500,000 to nonprofits in Maryland.” August 10, 2022. UnitedHealth Group. Available from: <https://www.unitedhealthgroup.com/newsroom/2022/2022-08-10-uhc-maryland-empowering-health-donation.html>

University of Maryland Charles Regional Hospital Center. “UM Charles Regional Medical Center’s Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program achieves national accreditation.” August 24, 2022. Southern Maryland Chronicle. Available from: <https://southernmarylandchronicle.com/2022/08/24/um-charles-regional-medical-centers-pulmonary-rehabilitation-program-achieves-national-accreditation/>

Wiseman, T. “UM UCH appoints four new board members.” August 8, 2022. Patch. Available from: <https://patch.com/maryland/belair/um-uch-appoints-four-new-board-members>

Zumer, B. “Almost \$1 million in federal funds awarded to Maryland community health centers.” August 8, 2022. WMAR2News. Available from: <https://www.wmar2news.com/news/local-news/almost-1-million-in-federal-funds-awarded-to-maryland-community-health-centers>

Health Disparities and Health Equity

Khan, A. “Montgomery County event focuses on educating Black women about healthy births.” August 14, 2022. Fox5DC. Available from: <https://www.fox5dc.com/news/montgomery-county-event-focuses-on-educating-black-women-about-healthy-births>

Lagasse, J. “UnitedHealthcare announces \$11M in grants to expand access to care, address SDOH.” August 11, 2022. Healthcare Finance. Available from: <https://www.healthcarefinancenews.com/news/unitedhealthcare-announces-11m-grants-expand-access-care-address-sdoh>

Montgomery County Government. “Montgomery County’s Health and Human Services’ Programs to Host Aug. 13 ‘Right from the Start’ Event That Will Focus on Support for Black Children and Families.” August 1, 2022. Montgomery County, MD Government. Available from: https://www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcgportalapps/Press_Detail.aspx?Item_ID=41946

UMB News. “Improving West Baltimore Cardiovascular Health.” August 4, 2022. University of Maryland Baltimore News. Available from: <https://www.umaryland.edu/news/archived-news/august-2022/improving-west-baltimore-cardiovascular-health.php>

University of Maryland School of Medicine. “University of Maryland School of Medicine faculty share \$13 million funding award to study fracture prevention strategies for osteoporosis.” August 10, 2022. University of Maryland School of Medicine. Available from: <https://www.medschool.umaryland.edu/news/2022/University-of-Maryland-School-of-Medicine-Faculty-Share-13-Million-Funding-Award-to-Study-Fracture-Prevention-Strategies-for-Osteoporosis.html>

Healthcare Costs

Maryland Department of Health. “Maryland and CMS advance Total Cost of Care Model and Maryland Primary Care Program with amendment, MOU.” August 18, 2022. Maryland Department of Health. Available from: <https://health.maryland.gov/newsroom/Pages/RELEASE-Maryland-and-CMS-advance-Total-Cost-of-Care-Model-and-Maryland-Primary-Care-Program-with-amendment,-MOU.aspx>

Ollove, M. “New safeguards in Maryland and other states may help those who are drowning in medical debt.” August 29, 2022. Maryland Matters. Available from: <https://www.marylandmatters.org/2022/08/29/new-safeguards-in-maryland-and-other-states-may-help-those-who-are-drowning-in-medical-debt/>

Telehealth

St. Mary’s County Health Department. “Telehealth booths opened at two local libraries.” August 22, 2022. St. Mary’s County Health Department. Available from: <https://smchd.org/2022/08/telehealth-booths-opened-at-two-local-libraries/>

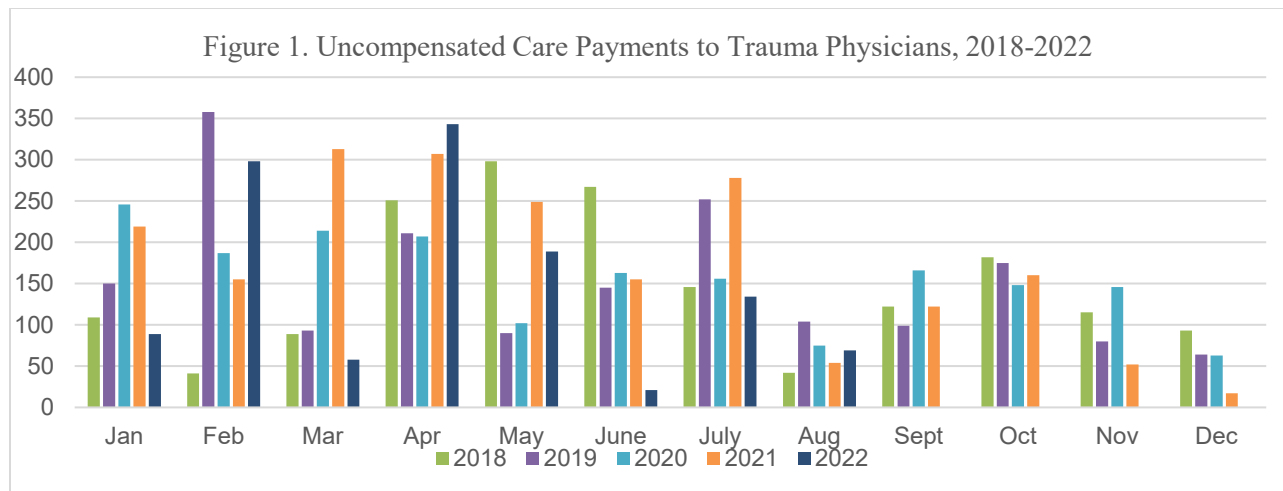
Maryland Trauma Physician Services Fund

Uncompensated Care Processing

Trustmark Health Benefits, the third-party administrator (TPA) for the Trauma Fund, processed \$134,228.56 uncompensated care claims through July 2022 and \$69,168.66 through August 2022.

On-Call Reimbursements

Staff received and processed on-call applications from ten (10) of the twelve (12) eligible Trauma and Specialty Centers. Thus far, reimbursements equal \$4,502,232.41 for these ten (10) centers. The remaining two (2) centers have assured us that they will be submitting their applications as soon as possible. Additionally, Children’s National Hospital has notified us that they will be submitting the annual standby application soon.



MHCC Website: The MHCC website (<https://MHCC.maryland.gov>) had 3,547 users in the month of August 2022.

Wear The Cost

In August 2022, 1,128 users visited the site.

Maryland Quality Reporting

The Maryland Quality Reporting website had 7,823 users, 9,046 sessions and 11,571 pageviews in July. The average session duration was 52 seconds, an increase of 31.6% from June. Website activity metrics increased overall this month, but this was expected since the third flight of the Maryland Public Television campaign that prompted higher than usual summer website traffic was running the last two weeks of the month.

In August, the Maryland Quality Reporting website metrics returned to expected performance levels except for the continued increase in the average session duration (e.g., The website had 5,576, users, 6,855 sessions and 8,816 pageviews. The average session duration was 58 seconds, an increase of 12.8% from July).

The site received the most website referrals from MHCC’s homepage in July and August (22.8% and 26.5%, respectively). Google advertisements associated with the Maryland Public Television campaign had the next highest representing 13.9% and 16.8% of referral traffic, respectively. Maryland 211 also refers users to the website.

Referrals from social media sites remain consistent. Facebook continues to be the primary social media referral source. The Maryland Public Television Facebook advertisements generated over 2,000 users combined in July and August.

Figure 2: Number of Website Users per Month, September 2021 - August 2022

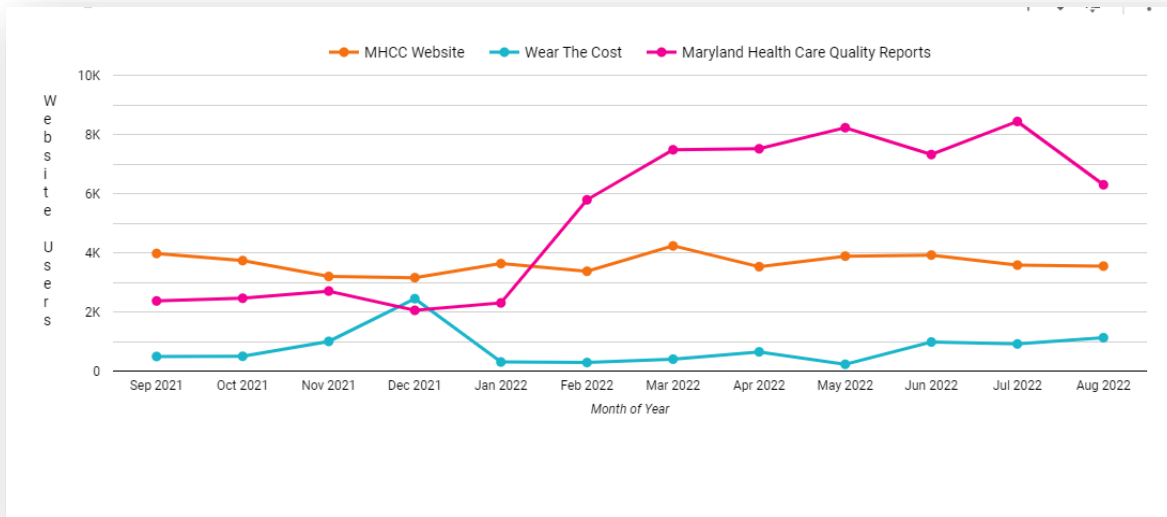


Figure 2 shows the number of website users over a 12-month period for each of the three websites maintained by Commission staff. Specific information about each website is listed above.

CENTER FOR ANALYSIS AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Cost and Quality Analysis – Shankar Mesta

MCDB Data Submission Status, Payor Compliance, and Technical Support

32 (97%) payors submitted complete clean Q2 2022 data as of end of August 2022.

Almost all payors (97%) 2022 Quarter data submissions successfully passed the Tier 3 data quality validation checks. To facilitate data submission, MHCC staff and Onpoint staff sent weekly reminders to payors to submit clean 2022 Q2 data before deadline of 08/31/2022. The new vendor has been very successful in accelerating data submissions that conform to the data specification requirements.

Special Projects – Janet Ennis

Requests for Mandate Analysis

Staff received formal letters of request from the Senate Finance and the House Health and Government Operations Committees to evaluate three proposed mandates that failed during this year’s legislative session. Consistent with Insurance Article §15-1501, it is their practice to have MHCC assess the social, medical, and financial impacts of a proposed mandated health insurance service or coverage before approving legislation to adopt the new mandate. The requested evaluations relate to the following failed bills:

- (1) SB 634 - requiring coverage of home test kits for sexually transmitted diseases
- (2) HB 142 - revising the current coverage of in vitro fertilization (IVF); and
- (3) SB 725/HB 974 - Health Insurance - Physical Therapy - Copayments, Coinsurance, and Deductibles

MHCC staff drafted small procurement Bid Boards for actuarial consulting services to conduct each mandate analysis.

On the first Bid Board for an actuarial consultant to evaluation SB 634, requiring coverage of home test kits for sexually transmitted diseases, staff received four proposals and the successful bidder selected by an Evaluation Committee is Axene Health Partners. Staff held a kick-off meeting and one follow-up status meeting with Axene as they begin their literature review and other analysis for the report. Staff received six proposals for the Bid Board on the physical therapy analysis and the Evaluation Committee awarded this contract to BerryDunn. Their work is well underway, including a survey of the major commercial carriers in Maryland. Finally, of the four proposals received for the IVF analysis, the Evaluation Committee selected Lewis & Ellis to conduct this study. Staff kicked off this project with Lewis & Ellis on September 7th. Staff anticipates that each actuarial evaluation will be completed by late Fall of 2022 and presented to the Commission for approval. All three mandate studies are due to the Legislature by the end of the year.

CENTER FOR HEALTH CARE FACILITIES PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Acute Care Policy and Planning – Eileen Fleck

COMAR 10.24.10 State Health Plan for Facilities and Services: General Acute Care Hospital Services

Staff developed draft regulations to circulate for internal review in September. Staff anticipates presenting an overview of suggested changes at the October Commission meeting.

Certificates of Ongoing Performance for Cardiac Surgery

Staff reviewed the application for renewal of UPMC Western Maryland Regional Medical Center’s Certificate of Ongoing Performance and began drafting a staff report. Applications from seven other hospitals are due by September 9, 2022.

Long-Term Care Policy and Planning – Linda Cole

FY 2021 Hospice Data:

Collection of data through the FY 2021 Maryland Hospice Survey has been completed.

Hospice Work Group:

The Hospice Work Group, which held meetings during 2018-2019, resumed its work with a meeting on July 11, 2022. Meeting handouts and a meeting summary are posted on the Commission’s website at:

https://mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/home/workgroups/workgroups_hospice.aspx

Palliative Care Services Work Group:

HB 378, passed during the 2022 legislative session, requires the Commission to convene a workgroup of interested stakeholders to study palliative care services and make recommendations to improve palliative care services in the State:

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2022RS/bills/hb/hb0378t.pdf>

During the summer, staff reached out to the groups mentioned in the legislation to invite members to represent the affected organizations. The membership has been finalized, and the first meeting is scheduled for September 21, 2022. The meeting will begin at 1 pm.

Nursing Home Occupancy and Medicaid Participation:

COMAR 10.24.20 requires the Commission to publish annually tables on nursing home bed occupancy and the minimum required Medicaid participation rate. This data, derived from the FY 2020 Long Term Care, will be published in the *Maryland Register* and posted on the Commission's website. The tables have been submitted for publication in the September 9, 2022, issue of the *Maryland Register*.

Home Health:

Staff updated the Commission's Home Health Agency (HHA) inventory and coordinated with the Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ) to update the HHA licenses to reflect Commission authorized jurisdictions from recent HHA Certificate of Need approvals, as well as determination of HHA acquisitions. Copies of the modified OHCQ-issued HHA licenses have been obtained and information on them has been verified.

FY 2021 Long Term Care Survey:

Staff completed the FY 2021 Maryland Long Term Care Survey for the chronic care, assisted living and adult day care facilities. For this survey, 100 % of chronic care, 92% of assisted living, and 94 % of adult day care facilities were compliant. Staff sent the notice of assessment of fine and right to contest the fine to 88 providers and waived the fine for 66 facilities that submitted an accepted survey by the notice submission deadline of August 12, 2022. This was further extended to August 24, 2022, for the notices re-sent by Fax transmission. Staff exempted 13 providers due to closure and no response. Staff will issue invoices to providers that were noncompliant.

Staff finalized the updates of the Long-Term Care Survey data and Medicaid Cost Report and created the final occupancy reports, three year occupancy tables, and the calculated Medicaid participation rate. Staff updated the public use data file on the commission's website.

FY 2020 Home Health Survey:

Staff has created initial public use files and utilization tables for FY 2020. The public use data and other reports will be posted on the Commission's website.

Certificate of Need ("CON") – Wynnee Hawk

Change in an Approved Exemption from CON Review.

Dimensions Health Corporation d/b/a University of Maryland (UM) Capital Region Health – Docket No. 18-16-EX002

An increase in the approved cost (\$18,354,366) for and changes in the physical plant design (adding 7,888 additional square feet of space) of a freestanding medical facility (FMF), Laurel Medical Center. The facility under development will be the ultimate FMF replacing the former UM Laurel Regional Hospital on a site adjacent to the former hospital. The change brings the total approved cost of this project to \$71,580,221.

CON Withdrawn

MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center – (Baltimore County – Docket No. 17-03-2405

Introduction of kidney transplantation services by the hospital.

CON Letters of Intent

Chesapeake Eye Surgery Center, LLC - (Anne Arundel County)

Establishment of an ambulatory surgical facility through the addition of a third operating room by an existing ambulatory surgery center (ASC).

Pre-Application Conferences

Chesapeake Eye Surgery Center, LLC - (Anne Arundel County)

August 17, 2022

Alpas-LaPlata – (Charles County)

August 24, 2022

CON Applications Filed

Pascal Crisis Stabilization Center – (Anne Arundel County) – Matter No. 22-02-2459

Establish a 25-bed Track 2 alcoholism and drug abuse intermediate care facility (ICF) within the existing Pascal Crisis Stabilization Center located at 43 Community Place in Crownsville.

Estimated Cost: \$20,500.

Request for Change in an Approved

Baltimore Detox Center, LLC – (Baltimore County) – Docket No. 18-03-2419

An increase in the approved cost (\$683,574) to establish an ICF. The change would bring the total approved cost of this project to \$1,269,556.

Determinations of Coverage

• **Ambulatory Surgery Centers**

American Access Care of Baltimore ASC, LLC - (Baltimore County)

Addition of a second operating room by an existing ASC.

Clearway Surgery Center of Frederick, LLC – (Frederick County)

Establish an ASC with two non-sterile procedure rooms to be located at 7100 Guilford Drive, Suite 152, in Frederick.

Point of Rocks Surgery Center – (Frederick County)

Addition of gastrointestinal endoscopy procedures by David Kossoff, M.D. at an existing ASC.

Point of Rocks Surgery Center – (Frederick County)

Addition of plastic surgery procedures by Behzad Parva, M.D. at an existing ASC.

VSA Surgery Center, LLC – (Baltimore County)

Name change of an existing ASC. The new name is VSA Surgery Center of Lutherville, LLC.

• **Acquisition/Change of Ownership**

Dennett Road Manor – (Garrett County)

Acquisition of a comprehensive care facility (CCF). Currently the land, building, and bed rights are owned by Axis Health at Frostburg Propco, LLC. After the transaction the real property will be owned by DRM Healthcare Realty, LLC and the bed rights will be owned by DRM Healthcare Operations, LLC. The operator of the facility is currently Dennett Road Manor, Inc., and after the transaction, the new operator will be DRM Healthcare Operations, LLC.

Purchase Price: \$15,543,000

Mountain City Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing – (Allegany County)

Acquisition of a CCF. Currently the land, building, and bed rights are owned by Axis Health at Frostburg Propco, LLC. After the transaction the real property will be owned by MC Healthcare Realty LLC, and the bed rights will be owned by MC Healthcare Operations, LLC. The operator of the facility is currently Axis Health at Frostburg OPCO, LLC, and after the transaction, the new operator will be MC Healthcare Operations, LLC.

Purchase Price: \$13,816,000

Summit Ambulatory Surgical Center, LLC – Bestgate Road – (Anne Arundel County)
Summit Ambulatory Surgical Center, LLC – Hospital Drive – (Baltimore County)
Summit Ambulatory Surgical Center, LLC – Green Tree Road – (Baltimore County)
Summit Ambulatory Surgical Center, LLC – N. Calvert Street – (Baltimore City)
Summit Ambulatory Surgical Center, LLC – N. Charles Street – (Baltimore City)
Summit Ambulatory Surgical Center, LLC – Wilken Avenue – (Baltimore County)
Summit Ambulatory Surgical Center, LLC – Plumtree Road – (Harford County)
Summit Ambulatory Surgical Center, LLC – Matapeake Business Dr – Prince George’s County
Summit Ambulatory Surgical Center, LLC – Charter Dr – (Howard County)
Summit Ambulatory Surgical Center, LLC – Observation Drive – (Montgomery County)
Summit Ambulatory Surgical Center, LLC – Buckingham Blvd – (Anne Arundel County)
Summit Ambulatory Surgical Center, LLC – Crossroads Drive, (Baltimore County)
Summit Ambulatory Surgical Center, LLC – Park Potomac Avenue – (Montgomery County)
Summit Ambulatory Surgical Center, LLC – Mount Herman Road – (Wicomico County)
Summit Ambulatory Surgical Center, LLC – International Drive – (Montgomery County)
Summit Ambulatory Surgical Center, LLC – Malcolm Drive – (Carroll County)

Summit Ambulatory Surgical Center, LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Chesapeake Urology Associates (CUA), owns the above-listed ASCs. CUA is owned by 51 physicians with equal ownership interests. The transaction is described as follows:

- CUA/USP Maryland Surgery Centers, LLC (CUA/USP) has been formed to acquire a 50.1% ownership interest in Summit Ambulatory Surgical Center, LLC.
- USP Maryland, Inc. (USP Maryland) will acquire 50.1% of the outstanding membership interest of CUA/USP.
- CUA Opco, LLC d/b/a United Urology Group (UUG), an entity that provides management services to CUA and Summit, will own 49.9% of the outstanding membership interest of CUA/USP.
- CUA/USP will acquire a 50.1% ownership interest in Summit, leaving CUA with a 49.9% direct ownership interest in Summit. UUG will hold a 25% indirect ownership interest in Summit. USP Maryland will provide management services to Summit pursuant to a management services agreement (MSA). UUG will continue to provide management services to CUA pursuant to an MSA.

Parkway Surgery Center, LLC – (Washington County)

Change in ownership of an ASC. WellSpan Health Care Services, a wholly owned subsidiary of WellSpan Health, will acquire 51 percent of the 78.4 percent ownership interest currently owned by SCA-Hagerstown, LLC through the creation of a new ownership entity, WellSpan-SCA Holdings, LLC. The transaction will involve the transfer of SCA-Hagerstown’s 78.4 percent ownership interest in Parkway to WellSpan-SCA Holdings and the acquisition of a 51 percent ownership in WellSpan-SCA Holdings by WellSpan Health Care Services. After the transaction, SCA-Hagerstown will have a 49 percent ownership of WellSpan-SCA Holdings, and WellSpan-SCA Holdings will have the full 78.4 percent ownership interest in Parkway, which is now held by SCA-Hagerstown. After the transaction, physician ownership will account for 21.6 percent of total ownership shares. The proposed transaction will also result in a future change of trade name for Parkway, without any change in corporate status. MHCC will be notified when this change occurs.

Physician ownership interests after the transaction will be as follows:

- Brian Holmes, M.D. 8.31%
- Neil O’Malley, M.D. 8.31%
- Thomas Larkin, M.D. 2.77%
- KGAK, Inc. (Ali Khawaje, M.D.) 2.21%

Seidenberg Protzko Surgery Center, LLC d/b/a Mid-Atlantic Surgery Pavilion – (Harford County)

Change in ownership of an ASC. NJ Eye, LLC d/b/a Prism Vision Group (Prism) will acquire a 70 percent ownership share of the ASC. The remaining 30 percent ownership share will be retained by Jonathan Seidenberg, M.D. and Eugene Protzko, M.D. (each with a 15 percent ownership share).

Andochick Surgery Center, LLC d/b/a Physicians Surgery Center of Frederick – (Frederick County)

Change of ownership of an ASC. The ownership share of the principal owner Scott Andochick, M.D., will increase from 25.65% to 31.15%. James Steinberg, D.O., will relinquish his 23.5% ownership share. The

ownership share of Kristin Nesbitt Silon, M.D., will be reduced from 23.5% to 20.5%. New owners are Steven Horton, M.D. (12%), Gabe Petruccelli, M.D. (3%), Korboi Evans, M.D. (3%), and Samuel Sanders, M.D. (3%). The ownership shares of Adam Mecinski, M.D. (11.14%), Sunil Thadani, M.D. (11.2%), and Matthew Levine, M.D. (5%) will not change.

Licensure

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

Little Sisters of the Poor, St. Martins Home – (Baltimore County)

Temporary delicensure of 18 CCF beds.

● **Waiver Beds**

Sterling Care Frostburg Village – (Allegany County)

Addition of 10 CCF beds, yielding a total of 132 beds.

King David Nursing & Rehabilitation Center – (Baltimore County)

Addition of 10 CCF beds, yielding a total of 110 beds.

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

Ridgeway Manor Nursing and Rehabilitation Center (Baltimore County)

Transaction: Acquisition of assets

CURRENT

Owner of the real property: Burleigh Enterprises Limited Partnership

Owner of bed rights: Ridgeway Manor Inc.

Operator: Ridgeway Manor Inc.

POST-TRANSACTION

Owner of the real property: RWM REALTY LLC

Owner of bed rights: RWM Operations, LLC

Operator: RWM Operations, LLC

Purchase price: \$7,300,000

Additional information: The CCF is located at 5743 Edmondson Avenue, Catonsville, Maryland. The facility currently has an average 3 out of 5-star rating on the CMS Nursing Home Compare website.¹ The facility has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Medicaid and has met the requirements of the MOU. The anticipated closing date of the transaction is November 1, 2022.

Commission staff notes that other CCFs owned or operated by Shalom Friedman have below average ratings (composite scores below three stars out of five) on the CMS Nursing Home Compare Five-Star Quality Rating System². Although the acquiring entity has met the notification requirements for an acquisition, it is notable that the track record of the person acquiring this CCF would probably fail to meet the requirements for docketing of a CON application to establish or expand a CCF under the State Health Plan Quality Rating standard [COMAR 10.24.20.05A(8)].

Coffman Nursing Home (Washington County)

Transaction: Acquisition of assets

CURRENT

Owner of the real property: Coffman Nursing Home

Owner of bed rights: Coffman Nursing Home

Operator: Coffman Nursing Home

¹ The rating scores were accessed on August 25, 2022, from the CMS Nursing Home Compare website. The data had been last updated on July 25, 2022.

² The rating scores were accessed on August 26, 2022, from the CMS Nursing Home Compare website. The data had been last updated on July 25, 2022.

POST-TRANSACTION

Owner of the real property: Fahrney-Keedy Memorial Home, Inc.

Owner of bed rights: Fahrney-Keedy Memorial Home, Inc.

Operator: Fahrney-Keedy Memorial Home, Inc.

Purchase price: \$0

Additional information: The CCF is located at 1304 Pennsylvania Avenue in Hagerstown. The facility currently has an above average 4 out of 5-star rating on the CMS Nursing Home Compare website. Commission staff notes that other CCFs owned or operated by Fahrney-Keedy Memorial Home Inc. have above average ratings (composite scores of four stars out of five) on the CMS Nursing Home Compare Five-Star Quality Rating System³. The facility does not have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Medicaid. The anticipated closing date of the transaction is November 1, 2022.

CENTER FOR HEALTH INFORMATION & INNOVATIVE CARE DELIVERY

Health Information Technology Division – Nikki Majewski, Division Chief

Telehealth Study

Two virtual town halls were convened with providers and payers to discuss the current and future state of telehealth. Participants shared perspectives, noting patient experiences with using audio-only and audio-visual technologies in somatic and behavioral health care. Staff collaborated with the National Opinion Research Center on the reporting framework for the recommendations and technical findings. A report is due to the Senate Finance Committee (SFC) and the House Health and Government Operations (HGO) Committee by December 1, 2022.

Interstate Telehealth Expansion Study

A meeting was held with Westat to discuss the preliminary work plan for the interstate telehealth study. Westat was competitively selected to complete the study requested by the HGO Committee. The study will evaluate the benefits, risks, barriers, and opportunities for advancing interstate telehealth. A recommendations report is due to the HGO Committee by December 1, 2023.

Prescription Drug Reporting

An environmental scan of community pharmacies technology systems required to support reporting of noncontrolled prescription drugs to CRISP was conducted. Chapter 296/House Bill 1127, *Public Health – State Designated Exchange – Health Data Utility* (HDU), of the 2022 laws of Maryland (LOM) requires dispensers to electronically report this information to CRISP for purposes of care coordination and treatment. Planning is underway to convene a technical workgroup in the fall to discuss implementing the requirements.

Health Data Utility Framework

A Health Data Utility framework (framework) development kick-off meeting was held with Civitas Networks for Health (Civitas). Civitas was competitively selected to develop an HDU framework that will guide health information exchange (HIE) organizations in implementing technical capabilities to support advance uses of data in care delivery and public health. The framework will serve as a guide for HIEs operating in Maryland and a model for other states.

³ The rating scores were accessed on August 25, 2022, from the CMS Nursing Home Compare website. The data had been last updated on July 25, 2022.

HIE Privacy and Security Regulations

Drafting of revisions to modernize COMAR 10.25.18, *Health Information Exchanges: Privacy and Security of Protected Health Information* and align them with federal policies is progressing. Post & Schell, P.C (P&S) was competitively selected to complete the work. The Board of Public Works will consider a P&S contract modification at its September 14th meeting. Funding will be used to develop draft regulations to support legislation passed by the General Assembly in 2021 and 2022.

State Designation Agreement

The HIE State Designation Agreement (agreement) was executed with CRISP. The three-year agreement sets forth CRISP's obligations as the State-Designated HIE. CRISP has received State designation since 2009 following enactment of State law requiring MHCC and the Health Services Cost Review Commission to designate a statewide HIE.

Hospital Assessment

Drafting of an electronic advance directives spotlight (spotlight) is underway using data collected from the 2022 *Hospital Health Information Technology Survey*. The spotlight overviews diffusion of advance directives in hospital electronic health record (EHR) systems. The spotlight is targeted for release in November.

Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) Environmental Scan

Data analysis of the *FQHC Health IT Questionnaire* (questionnaire) responses is underway. Approximately 17 FQHCs representing 94 percent of service delivery sites statewide completed the questionnaire. The findings will inform health IT diffusion strategies. The questionnaire was developed in collaboration with the Mid-Atlantic Association for Community Health Centers.

Patient Generated Health Data (PGHD)

Three responses were received from health systems to a Request for Information (RFI), *Integration of Patient Generated Health Data (PGHD) into Care Delivery Workflows*. The RFI seeks information on innovative use cases that integrate PGHD created outside of clinical settings with EHRs to support care delivery. A review of the responses is underway, and completion is targeted for October.

Breaches

Development is progressing on a spotlight of health care data breaches affecting 500 or more individuals. Data was obtained from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights and includes information on breach type, records compromised, and the reporting entity. The analysis will assess national and statewide breach trends. The spotlight is targeted for release in October.

Electronic Data Interchange

An analysis of payers' responses to the 2022 Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) Progress Report (report) was finalized. COMAR 10.25.09, *Requirements for Payers to Designate Electronic Health Networks*, requires payers with annual premiums exceeding \$1 million to submit a census report on HIPAA administrative transactions. A summary of the findings is targeted for release in October.

Cybersecurity

Updates to the *Cybersecurity Readiness Assessment Tool* are advancing. The tool uses select elements from the National Institutes of Standard and Technology Cybersecurity Framework to help users identify, assess, and respond to risk. Updates reflect a changing cybersecurity landscape to enable small practices to better prepare and prioritize decisions regarding cybersecurity.

Long Term Care Health IT Questionnaire

Data collection of responses to the annual Long Term Care Health IT Questionnaire (questionnaire) is advancing. Comprehensive care facilities were requested to complete the questionnaire, which assesses use of EHRs, HIE, telehealth, social determinants of health technology, electronic advance directives, and cybersecurity controls. Findings help identify emerging health IT trends and related policy matters that inform diffusion strategies. Data collection continues through September.

Innovative Care Delivery Division – Melanie Cavaliere, Division Chief

Advanced Care Delivery

Primary Care Workgroup

Stakeholders representing providers, consumers, employers, payers, and health researchers were asked to nominate a representative for the Primary Care Workgroup (workgroup). Chapter 667/Senate Bill 734 (2022 LOM), *Maryland Health Care Commission – Primary Care Report and Workgroup*, requires MHCC to annually study primary care investments and make recommendations based on its findings that include quality and access to primary care services, among other things. A Request for Proposals (not to exceed \$50,000) was released to identify a contractor that can develop a briefing document and workplan to facilitate activities of the workgroup. The workgroup will develop an analysis plan in 2023, annual reporting to the SFC and HGO begins in 2024.

Practice Transformation Grant Activities

Workflow redesign activities in collaboration with MedChi Care Transformation Organization (CTO) are proceeding for nearly 44 practices in the *Advancing Practice Transformation in Ambulatory Practices*. The workflow redesign categories include: (1) referral management; (2) patient and family engagement; (3) quality improvement; and (4) data collection, utilization, and analysis. Practice recruitment by the CTO for Round 2 is underway, the CTO plans to provide transformation support for up to 25 practices.

Practice Roundtable

The practice health equity roundtable (roundtable) convened to identify themes for a health equity symposium (symposium). Roundtable symposium planning activities will continue throughout the fall with a Q1 2023 symposium planned. Suggested topics include identifying social resources for patients, patterns of need in the community, and community-based organizations for referrals.

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 data refreshes include hospitals, assisted living facilities, and price transparency. Additional enhancements and updated features are underway and routine updates and maintenance are ongoing. Staff continues 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 higher in July (7,823 users) but lower in August (5,576) compared to June (6,775 users). However, the number of users continues to remain higher than usual because of the MPT advertising campaign (discussed below in the MQR Website Promotion section). 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 75 social media posts in July and 85 posts in August. Topics included Sepsis Awareness Month, Minority Mental Health Awareness Month, National Immunization 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. Digital, social media, and print advertising began in early February and will continue through December. Since the campaign began in February, the number of users to the site has increased significantly. Historically there are approximately 2,000 visitors to the site per month. Since February, an average of approximately 6,300 users visit the site each month.

Staff continue to give website demonstrations to various industry stakeholder groups to increase awareness of the website. Staff recently presented to the Maryland Attorney General's Health Education and Advocacy Unit (HEAU). HEAU works with consumers and provides advice and resources for healthcare related billing questions, price information, and much more. The HEAU links to the Maryland Quality Reporting on their website if consumers are interested in learning more about quality programs. The site is located here: <https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/pages/cpd/heu/default.aspx>.

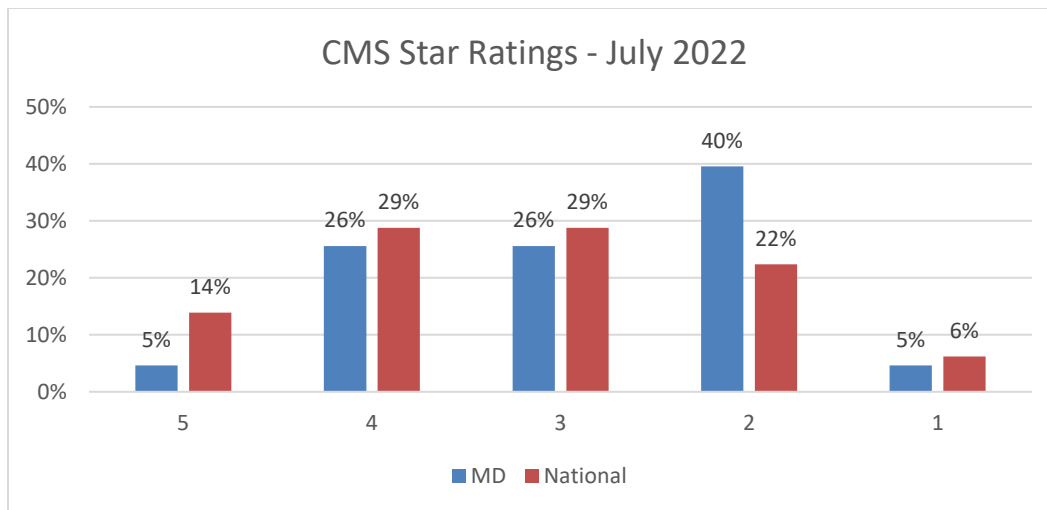
Hospital Quality Initiatives – Courtney Carta

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 MQR consumer website. Statewide performance was negatively affected as a result of the pandemic, but infection ratios are starting to improve. Statewide hospital performance for clostridioides difficile (CDI) and surgical site infections for colon surgery was significantly better than the national experience. Maryland hospitals performed about the same as the national experience on the following infection types: catheter associated urinary tract infections (CAUTI), central line associated blood stream infections (CLABSI), and methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) and surgical site infections including hip replacement, knee replacement, abdominal hysterectomy, and CABG. One area that the state continues to struggle with since the pandemic is CLABSI infections in the ICU. The Maryland hospital healthcare worker flu vaccination rate was 94%. Though still high, this is a decline from 97% which has been the average of the past several years.

CMS Star Ratings

CMS utilizes a star rating system to measure hospital performance to help consumers make informed healthcare decisions. The star rating summarizes a variety of measures across five areas of quality into a single star rating for each hospital (5 stars is the best). Since the last release in April 2021, the methodology has changed to ensure like-hospitals are measured comparably, though the most recent results are relatively similar to the previous cycle. Compared to the nation, Maryland has fewer 5-star facilities, about the same proportion of 1, 3, and 4-star facilities, and almost twice as many 2-star facilities, proportionally.



Long Term Care and Health Plan Quality Initiatives—Stacy Howes

Nursing Home Family Experience of Care Survey

The results of the 2021 survey are now available on the Quality Reporting website. For the 2022 survey, all nursing homes have submitted their resident lists, and the contractor is preparing to send invitation packets to loved ones of nursing home residents. The current contractor, Market Decisions Research, is in their final year of the current contract. A new RFP has been submitted to procurement.

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

Data for the 2021-2022 flu season is publicly available on the Quality Reporting website for all long-term care facilities.

Assisted Living Quality Analysis SB531

SB531 requires the MHCC to conduct an analysis of the quality of care in assisted living (AL) facilities with fewer than 10 beds. The purpose is to determine whether AL programs receive sufficient reimbursement to cover costs, there are sufficient staffing and resources, and how quality can be improved. A bid board was posted for a contractor to assist with this project, and Swain Eng and Associates was chosen as the contractor. The kickoff meeting is scheduled for September 7, 2022.

Health Plan Quality Initiatives

All data for the 2021 reporting year has been submitted to the contractor, and data analysis has begun.

Collaboration with Center for Health Facilities and Planning

Staff are actively assisting with the formation of the Palliative Care Workgroup required under legislation passed in 2022. This workgroup will begin meeting later this month. Staff are actively assisting with the Hospice Workgroup by providing information about quality measures and calculating a proposed methodology for determining quality.

Outpatient Quality Initiative—Mariama Gondo

Outpatient Quality Initiative

In August, staff launched the 2021 enhanced freestanding ambulatory surgical facility (FASF) survey. The FASF survey is being administered to 347 facilities that were reported as operational in the calendar year 2021. To date 129 of those facilities have started their survey with 38 of that 129 completed and submitted their survey. The survey closes October 7, 2022.

Health Equity Initiative

Staff continues to work on building the health equity inventory that stems from the work of the 2021 House Bill 309/Senate Bill 565. The inventory will allow consumers to search by various variables (jurisdictions, types of services, etc.) to find which services support vulnerable populations across the state.