

Maryland Psychiatric Society Position on Integration of Mental Health, Substance Use, and Primary Care Systems and Services

The health care system in Maryland faces challenges on multiple fronts. One of them is fragmented systems of care. In 2019, the Maryland Department of Health initiated a two-year process of exploring changes to the public and private healthcare delivery systems. Although there are some advantages, the current mental health and addiction insurance carve-outs reinforce stigmatization and enable discrimination of people with psychiatric illness. Yet effective communication, coordination of care, and elimination of discriminatory practices are not necessarily achieved by simply eliminating carve-outs. The Maryland Psychiatric Society has an interest in ensuring that Maryland citizens have unfettered and timely access to comprehensive, coordinated, evidence-based, quality treatment and recovery services for mental health and substance use disorders in both primary and specialty care settings.

The Maryland Psychiatric Society supports legislative and regulatory changes to the healthcare delivery model that integrates somatic and behavioral healthcare systems and services in a manner that aligns the incentives of the patients, practitioners, payors, and the State, with guiding principles that include:

- patient-centeredness,
- adequate continuum of community-based services, including psychiatric rehabilitation,
- quality integrated care management and care coordination,
- stakeholder oversight and data transparency,
- accountable parity compliance,
- provider communication,
- transparent network adequacy,
- patient- and provider-friendly reimbursement processes,
- minimization of administrative overhead, and
- payor and provider incentives to coordinate and to promote positive outcomes and prevent negative outcomes and to control unnecessary costs.

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