



Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Secretary

To: Shannon Hall, Executive Director of the Community Behavioral Health Association of Maryland

From: Steven R. Schuh, Deputy Secretary for Health Care Financing and Medicaid
Linda Rittelmann, Medicaid Behavioral Health ASO Lead

Re: Commentary in MarylandReporter.com 3.17.22

Date: March 17 , 2022

Dear Shannon,

This is in response to your commentary published online today on the MarylandReporter.com website. The Maryland Department of Health understands and appreciates your concerns regarding the issues with Optum Maryland and their initial inability to pay claims for the Estimated Payment period of January 1, 2020 - August 3, 2022, but we take issue with some of the claims in your letter.

In your letter, you state the following:

“Now, the Maryland Department of Health is beginning a process to recoup over \$200 million in alleged “overpayments” from providers – an amount that providers report is largely made of claims that Optum failed to process correctly for services that were delivered during the pandemic’s initial months....Maryland’s behavioral health providers are being required to return funds **for services that they actually delivered.**”

In truth, of the \$212 million in estimated payments yet to be recouped, \$81 million is made up of denials that may require corrective action on the part of the provider to resubmit and reprocess. Of that, far less than \$81 million is likely to be overturned and paid. MDH has directed Optum to give providers the information they need to resubmit these claims and reprocess them in the next 60 days.

While it is unfortunate that estimated payments coincided with the pandemic and subsequent workforce shortage, it remains a fact that services levels declined for most providers across the board during that period of time and, as a result, actual overpayments were made – they were not subsidies or grants. They were payments in good faith for services that would have been provided under normal circumstances, and MDH has provided timely and complete financial relief for 40% or more of affected providers.

We have also agreed to postpone collections at the provider's request on multiple occasions until they have adequate time to review the complete claims history reports once they were in production.

We value our collaboration in resolving these issues so we can offer more and improved Behavioral Health services to the residents of Maryland. Please do not hesitate to contact us, or Optum, Maryland directly with any further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Steven R. Schuh
Deputy Secretary for Health Care Financing and Medicaid

cc: Linda Rittelmann
Lauren Grimes
Shannon Hall
Lori Doyle
Mike Oliver
Kathleen Ellis