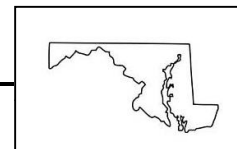


# Hepatitis C: State of Medicaid Access Report Card

## Maryland

Estimated Number of Individuals Living with Hepatitis C: 40,600<sup>1</sup>



Grade	Summary
<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; text-align: center;">A-</p>	<p><b>Liver Damage (Fibrosis) Restrictions:</b> Fee-For-Service (FFS) and most managed care organizations (MCOs), Aetna, Amerigroup, CareFirst, Kaiser Permanente, Jai, Maryland Physicians Care, MedStar, and UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, do not impose any liver damage restrictions. One MCO, Priority Partners, has unclear liver damage restrictions.</p> <p><b>Sobriety Restrictions:</b> FFS and most MCOs (Aetna, Amerigroup, CareFirst, Kaiser Permanente, Jai, Maryland Physicians Care, MedStar, and UnitedHealthcare Community Plan) do not impose sobriety restrictions. Priority Partners requires screening for active alcohol and substance use.</p> <p><b>Prescriber Restrictions:</b> FFS and most MCOs (Aetna, Amerigroup, CareFirst, Jai, Maryland Physicians Care, MedStar, and UnitedHealthcare Community Plan) require that patients have a treatment plan developed by or in collaboration with a provider with expertise in hepatitis C management but does not require certain specialists to prescribe or consult. Kaiser Permanente requires a prescription by or in consultation with a gastroenterologist, hepatologist, infectious disease or transplant specialist. Priority Partners has unclear prescriber restrictions.</p> <p><b>Recommendations to Improve Patient Access:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure parity across FFS and MCO programs and transparency about coverage criteria.</li> <li>• Remove prior authorization for simplified treatment.</li> </ul> <p><i>Grade Rationale: Maryland Medicaid FFS and nearly all MCOs provide consistent access to hepatitis C medications. Most recently Maryland improved access by removing questions related to substance use. FFS requires that a provider with experience managing hepatitis c treatment must prescribe or consult. Most MCOs impose the same requirements and are transparent in their coverage criteria. Maryland could raise its grade to an "A+" by ensuring full parity and removing prior authorization requirements.</i></p>

### Background

As of June 2021, Maryland had 1,520,004 individuals enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP.<sup>2</sup> Maryland’s Medicaid program, known as Medical Assistance, operates a Fee-For-Service (FFS) program and contracts with managed care organizations (MCOs) known as HealthChoice.<sup>3</sup> Most beneficiaries, 86 percent, are enrolled in HealthChoice, a statewide mandatory MCO program. The remaining 14 percent participate in FFS.<sup>4</sup> HealthChoice contracts with nine health insurance plans including Aetna, Amerigroup Community Care (Amerigroup), CareFirst BlueCross Blue Shield Community Health Plan Maryland (CareFirst), Jai Medical Systems (Jai), Kaiser Permanente, Maryland Physicians Care, MedStar Family Choice, Priority Partners, and UnitedHealthcare Community Plan.<sup>5</sup>

### State of Medicaid Hepatitis C Treatment Access

Maryland FFS has moderate access to hepatitis C treatment. FFS requires prior authorization (PA) but does not require a minimum liver damage level to qualify for treatment.<sup>6</sup> As a result of advocacy efforts, the PA form no longer inquires about substance use disorder history. The form notes that “adherence with prescribed therapy is a condition for payment of therapy for up to the allowed timeframe for each HCV genotype,” and the criteria states that providers must assess and document the patient’s ability to adhere to therapy.<sup>7</sup> FFS requires a diagnosis of chronic hepatitis C as confirmed by HCV antibody and HCV RNA completed six months apart, (b) documentation of diagnosis in previous clinical notes, or (c) documentation of exposure risk history in previous clinical notes. The PA form also requests HCV genotype, fibrosis level, and previous HCV treatment history. While the FFS criteria requires that patients have a treatment plan developed either by or in collaboration with a provider with expertise in hepatitis C management, no specific specialist provider is required to prescribe or consult.<sup>8</sup> Maryland FFS Preferred Drug List (PDL) includes Mavyret, Vosevi, Zepatier, and generic Harvoni and Eplclusa as preferred, with Daklinza, Sovaldi, and Viekira Pak as non-preferred.<sup>9</sup>

Most MCOs impose the same coverage requirements as FFS. Many MCOs direct patients and providers seeking information on hepatitis C coverage requirements to the state’s FFS criteria and forms. Aetna,<sup>10</sup> Amerigroup,<sup>11</sup> CareFirst<sup>12</sup>, Jai,<sup>13</sup> Maryland Physicians Care,<sup>14</sup> MedStar,<sup>15</sup> and UnitedHealthcare Community Plan<sup>16</sup> all reference or directly link to the FFS criteria and follow the same coverage requirements.

Kaiser Permanente publishes its own prior authorization form and criteria. Kaiser's criteria follows FFS in that no longer inquires about substance use disorder history, though the criteria does require documentation of the prescriber's assessment of patient adherence.<sup>17</sup> However, the criteria states that a prescription must be prescribed by or in consultation with a gastroenterologist, hepatologist, infectious disease or transplant specialist. Kaiser's criteria may be less stringent than FFS in that it appears to allow treatment for acute hepatitis C.<sup>18</sup>

Priority Partners also publishes its own prior authorization form with unclear requirements. The form asks about fibrosis stage and prescriber specialty but does not indicate specific restrictions.<sup>19</sup> The form inquires about any diagnosis of active substance use disorder and, if present, whether the patient is in treatment and if not whether an adherence assessment has been done.<sup>20</sup>

## Liver Damage (Fibrosis) Restrictions

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Maryland FFS does not impose liver damage restrictions.

Aetna, Amerigroup, CareFirst, Kaiser Permanente, Jai, Maryland Physicians Care, MedStar, and UnitedHealthcare Community Plan also do not impose liver damage restrictions.

Priority Partners has unclear liver damage restrictions.

## Sobriety Restrictions

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Maryland FFS does not impose substance use restrictions.

Aetna, Amerigroup, CareFirst, Kaiser Permanente, Jai, Maryland Physicians Care, MedStar, and UnitedHealthcare Community Plan also do not impose sobriety restrictions.

Priority Partners requires screening to determine if the patient has an active diagnosis of a substance use disorder. If present, FFS and MCOs ask if the beneficiary is actively engaged in treatment and, if not, then whether the prescriber has conducted an adherence assessment to assure successful treatment completion.

## Prescriber Restrictions

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Maryland FFS requires that a patient has a treatment plan developed either by or in collaboration with a provider with expertise in hepatitis C management; however, no specific specialist provider is required to prescribe or consult.

Aetna, Amerigroup Community Care, Jai Medical Systems, Maryland Physicians Care, MedStar Family Choice, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, and University of Maryland Health Partners, also require a treatment plan developed either by or in collaboration with a provider with expertise in hepatitis C management.

Kaiser Permanente requires a prescription by or in consultation with a gastroenterologist, hepatologist, infectious disease or transplant specialist.

Priority Partners has unclear prescriber restrictions.

## Points of Contact for Questions & Concerns about Maryland's State of Medicaid Hepatitis C Access

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### Medicaid<sup>21</sup>: Steve Schuh, Medicaid Director, Maryland Department of Health

201 West Preston Street, Room 525, Baltimore, Maryland 21201; Telephone: (410) 767-5343

### Drug Utilization Review (DUR)<sup>22</sup>: Maryland Pharmacy Program Office

201 West Preston St., Baltimore, MD, 21201; Telephone: 1(800)492-5231, option # 3

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland State Profile, HepVu: <https://hepvu.org/state/maryland/>.

<sup>2</sup> Medicaid and CHIP in Maryland, By-State, Medicaid.gov: <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/by-state/stateprofile.html?state=maryland>.

<sup>3</sup> HealthChoice, Maryland Department of Health: <https://mmcp.health.maryland.gov/healthchoice/pages/Home.aspx>.

<sup>4</sup> Share of Medicaid Population Covered under Different Delivery Systems, Medicaid Managed Care Tracker, The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation: <http://www.kff.org/medicaid/state-indicator/share-of-medicaid-population-covered-under-different-delivery-systems/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>.

<sup>5</sup> MCO Comparison Chart, Maryland Department of Health, July 1, 2021 (Accessed December 2021): <https://health.maryland.gov/mmcp/epsdt/EPSDT%20Resources/MCO%20Comparison%20Chart.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Clinical Criteria for Hepatitis C (HCV) Therapy, Maryland Department of Health, Updated January 7, 2021 (Accessed December 2021):

<https://mmcp.health.maryland.gov/pap/docs/HCV%20Clinical%20Criteria%20final%201%207%2021.pdf>; See also Hepatitis C Therapy Prior Authorization Form, Maryland Department of Health, Updated July 1, 2021 (Accessed December 2021): <https://health.maryland.gov/mmcp/pap/docs/Hepatitis%20C/Hepatitis%20C%20PA%20form%20final%20Nov%202021.pdf>; See also Hepatitis C Therapy, Maryland Department of Health: <https://mmcp.health.maryland.gov/pap/Pages/Hepatitis-C-Therapy.aspx>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. Clinical Criteria for Hepatitis C (HCV) Therapy, Maryland Department of Health, Updated January 7, 2021 (Accessed December 2021); See also Hepatitis C Therapy Prior Authorization Form, Maryland Department of Health, Updated July 7, 2021 (Accessed December 2021)

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. Clinical Criteria for Hepatitis C (HCV) Therapy, Maryland Department of Health, Updated January 7, 2021 (Accessed December 2021); See also Hepatitis C Therapy Prior Authorization Form, Maryland Department of Health, Updated July 7, 2021 (Accessed December 2021)

<sup>9</sup> Preferred Drug List, Maryland Department of Health: [https://mmcp.health.maryland.gov/pap/docs/Maryland\\_PDL\\_7.1.20.pdf](https://mmcp.health.maryland.gov/pap/docs/Maryland_PDL_7.1.20.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Pharmacy Prior Authorization Guidelines, Aetna Better Health of Maryland: <https://www.aetnabetterhealth.com/maryland/providers/pharmacy/prior-auth>.

<sup>11</sup> Pharmacy information and tools, Amerigroup: <https://provider.amerigroup.com/maryland-provider/member-eligibility-and-pharmacy/pharmacy> (note that this links to the FFS criteria page); See also Hepatitis C Treatment Prior Authorization (PA) Amerigroup: [https://provider.amerigroup.com/docs/gpp/MDMD\\_HepCProviderPAForm.pdf?v=202008172118](https://provider.amerigroup.com/docs/gpp/MDMD_HepCProviderPAForm.pdf?v=202008172118).

<sup>12</sup> Pharmacy Authorizations and Medication Exceptions, CareFirst Community Health Plan Maryland: <https://www.umhealthpartners.com/find-a-drug-or-pharmacy/pharmacy-authorizations/>.

<sup>13</sup> Pharmacy Prescription Prior Authorization, Jai Medical Systems: <https://www.jaimedicalsystems.com/providers/pharmacy/>.

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- <sup>14</sup> Prior Authorization Request Forms, Maryland Physicians Care: <https://www.marylandphysicianscare.com/providers/approved-drug-benefits/prior-auth-request.html>.
- <sup>15</sup> Hepatitis C Medications, MedStar Family Choice: <https://www.medstarfamilychoice.com/maryland-healthchoice/for-maryland-healthchoice-physicians/pharmacy/hepatitis-c-medications/>.
- <sup>16</sup> Hepatitis C Therapy Prior Authorization Form, Maryland Department of Health/UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Maryland, Updated July 1, 2021 (Accessed December 2021): <https://www.uhcprovider.com/content/dam/provider/docs/public/prior-auth/uhccp-pharmacy-forms/h-1/MD-Hepatitis-C-Medications-PA-Form.pdf>.
- <sup>17</sup> Hepatitis C Treatment Therapy Prior Authorization (PA), Kaiser Permanente, Updated October 1, 2020 (Accessed December 2021): [https://www.providers.kaiserpermanente.org/info\\_assets/cpp\\_mas/Maryland\\_Health\\_Choice\\_Prior\\_Authorization\\_\(PA\)\\_for\\_Hepatitis\\_C\\_Agents.pdf](https://www.providers.kaiserpermanente.org/info_assets/cpp_mas/Maryland_Health_Choice_Prior_Authorization_(PA)_for_Hepatitis_C_Agents.pdf); See also Kaiser Permanente Maryland Medicaid Prior Authorization Criteria, Updated November 1, 2021 (Accessed December 2021): [http://www.providers.kaiserpermanente.org/info\\_assets/cpp\\_mas/Maryland\\_Health\\_Choice\\_Prior\\_Authorization\(PA\)Criteria.pdf](http://www.providers.kaiserpermanente.org/info_assets/cpp_mas/Maryland_Health_Choice_Prior_Authorization(PA)Criteria.pdf).
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid. Hepatitis C Treatment Therapy Prior Authorization (PA), Kaiser Permanente, Updated October 1, 2020 (Accessed December 2021); See also Kaiser Permanente Maryland Medicaid Prior Authorization Criteria, Updated November 1, 2021 (Accessed December 2021).
- <sup>19</sup> Hepatitis C Therapy Prior Authorization Form, John Hopkins Healthcare/Priority Partners, Updated August 1, 2020 (Accessed December 2021): [https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/johns\\_hopkins\\_healthcare/downloads/ppmco/ppmco\\_hepatitis\\_c\\_prior\\_authorization.pdf](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/johns_hopkins_healthcare/downloads/ppmco/ppmco_hepatitis_c_prior_authorization.pdf).
- <sup>20</sup> Hepatitis C Therapy Prior Authorization Form, John Hopkins Healthcare/Priority Partners, Updated August 1, 2020 (Accessed December 2021)
- <sup>21</sup> Maryland, Medicaid Directors, National Association of Medicaid Directors: <http://medicaiddirectors.org/about/medicaid-directors/>.
- <sup>22</sup> Contact information for Maryland Medicaid Pharmacy Program, Contact Us, Maryland Department of Health: <https://mmcp.health.maryland.gov/pap/Pages/CONTACT.aspx>.