

Committee to facilitate the investigation of complaints, presumably meaning investigations by MIA. This overlapping authority creates the potential for confusion and inconsistent outcomes. I am mindful, however, that one of the driving forces behind this aspect of the bill is the ongoing tension between HMOs and health care providers, including minority providers, who can be aggrieved by adverse actions and decisions by HMOs. Providers must have access to a meaningful grievance mechanism. This is particularly true as more and more Marylanders opt to receive their health insurance through HMOs. The passage of Senate Bill 750, which authorizes the enrollment of Medicaid patients in "managed care organizations" which are not necessarily HMOs, also highlights the general shift toward managed care.

On May 14, 1996, I signed the Health Care Payor and Provider Act of 1996, House Bill 1374. That bill, among other things, established a temporary Task Force to Study Patient and Provider Appeal and Grievance Mechanisms. The Task Force is charged with evaluating the effectiveness of patient and provider grievance mechanisms used to appeal decisions of HMOs. The Task Force is to report any recommendations for changes by October 15, 1996. Before creating a separate and permanent advisory committee to consider complaints by providers, it would seem worthwhile to await the findings and recommendations of the Task Force.

In summary, the purposes of this bill are laudable and I support them in concept. If administrative efforts to improve the coordination of HMO activities prove less than satisfactory, or the Task Force, under House Bill 1374, confirms the need for changes to the recently enacted law relating to provider complaints, I will look forward to working with the sponsors of this legislation on a bill for next year.

For these reasons, I have vetoed House Bill 1370.

Sincerely,
Parris N. Glendening
Governor

House Bill No. 1370

AN ACT concerning

Advisory Committee on Health Maintenance Organization Performance

FOR the purpose of establishing an Advisory Committee on Health Maintenance Organization Performance; establishing the purposes of the Committee; specifying the composition, terms of appointment, and staff services for the Committee; and generally relating to the establishment of an Advisory Committee on Health Maintenance Organization Performance.

BY adding to

Article - Health - General

Section 19-705.6

Annotated Code of Maryland

(1990 Replacement Volume and 1995 Supplement)