



Planned Parenthood of Maryland

For Immediate Release

December 17, 2015

Media Contacts

Heather Ford

410-598-8256

heatherford2@gmail.com

Jennifer Curran

443-721-0198

Jennifer.Curran@ppm.care

Law Slams Shut Gap in Insurance Confidentiality Regulations

**Ensures Privacy of all Health Care Decisions
Made by Vulnerable Women and Families**

*Form released today by Maryland Insurance Administration instructs insurers
to follow patients' lead on where to mail Explanation Of Benefits*

Baltimore, Maryland (December 17, 2014) – A form released today by the Maryland Insurance Administration will offer protections to survivors of domestic violence and substantially expand access to healthcare for women and families.

“This is a victory for anyone in need of health care who genuinely fears for their safety, and worries what might happen if their personal health insurance information (Explanation of Benefits) is shared with the policyholder,” said State Senator Delores Kelley (D-10), the legislation’s chief sponsor.

Maryland is one of the first in the nation to ensure privacy of confidential medical information in insurance communications for those seeking reproductive health care, mental health treatment, or medical treatment or counseling due to domestic violence.

“We regularly see patients who are fearful, and delay or avoid treatment, or pay exorbitant out-of-pocket costs for care routinely covered by their insurance, rather than risk what might happen if the policyholder were to find out about their medical treatment,” said Jenny Black, CEO of Planned Parenthood of Maryland.

“I was personally involved in a case in which the husband beat his wife to death due to information he received in the Explanation of Benefits,” said Lorraine Diana, a Maryland Nurse Practitioner when she testified in Annapolis in support of the legislation.

As staunch advocates of patient rights, Planned Parenthood of Maryland led the successful bipartisan campaign for passage of Senate Bill 790 – Communications Between Carriers and Enrollees – Conformity with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. The Maryland General Assembly unanimously passed SB 790, advancing the use of privacy protections already in place under HIPAA. The Governor signed the bill into law on April 8, 2014.

The form released today by the Maryland Insurance Administration provides individuals who feel endangered the means to protect their privacy. Once signed and submitted, the form instructs insurance companies to forward all insurance communications to an address provided by the patient as opposed to the address determined by the policyholder.

“Our job now is to raise public awareness of these legal protections and encourage survivors of domestic violence and others to access any needed medical treatment,” Black said.

“We believe that this one page form will foster a sense of safety among those living in fear, and ultimately save lives.”

Download the new form at the Planned Parenthood of Maryland website
<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/planned-parenthood-maryland/client-resources/online-patient-forms/patient-privacy>

###

The mission of Planned Parenthood of Maryland is to enable all Marylanders to have access to a wide range of high quality affordable reproductive health care services. By providing medical services, education, training and advocacy, PPM seeks to help individuals make informed decisions about their reproductive health, family planning options and sexuality.

Law Slams Shut Gap in Insurance Confidentiality Regulations