

ARTICLE, RECEIVED BY THE CLAIMANT IN CONNECTION WITH A CLAIM UNTIL A FINAL DECISION IS MADE BY THE SECRETARY ON THE CLAIM.

(3) ON FILING BY A PARTY OF A NOTICE OF A CLAIM FILED UNDER THIS SUBTITLE, A COURT SHALL STAY ALL PROCEEDINGS IN AN ACTION RELATED TO HEALTH CARE PROVIDED TO A CLAIMANT IN CONNECTION WITH THE CLAIM UNTIL THE COURT IS NOTIFIED THAT A FINAL DECISION ON THE CLAIM HAS BEEN MADE.

(4) CLAIMANTS UNDER THIS SUBTITLE ARE PROTECTED UNDER THE MARYLAND CONSUMER DEBT COLLECTION ACT IN TITLE 14, SUBTITLE 2 OF THE COMMERCIAL LAW ARTICLE.

(5) (I) A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER WHO RECEIVES NOTICE THAT A CLAIM HAS BEEN FILED UNDER THIS SUBTITLE MAY NOTIFY THE BOARD IN WRITING OF THE DEBT OWED BY THE CLAIMANT IN CONNECTION WITH THE CLAIM.

(II) IF A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER NOTIFIES THE BOARD UNDER SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF THIS PARAGRAPH, THE BOARD SHALL NOTIFY THE HEALTH CARE PROVIDER IN WRITING WHEN A FINAL DECISION IS MADE ON THE CLAIM.

(6) AFTER A FINAL DECISION ON THE CLAIM UNDER THIS SUBTITLE, A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER THAT HAS RECEIVED NOTICE OF A PENDING CLAIM UNDER THIS SUBTITLE MAY ENGAGE IN DEBT COLLECTION ACTIVITIES OR FILE A CIVIL ACTION IN COURT UNTIL THE LATER OF:

(I) THE EXPIRATION OF THE TIME FOR FILING A CIVIL ACTION IN COURT; OR

(II) 6 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FINAL DECISION ON THE CLAIM UNDER THIS SUBTITLE.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2006.

Approved April 11, 2006.

**CHAPTER 70**

**(Senate Bill 117)**

AN ACT concerning

**Department of Health and Mental Hygiene - Office of the Inspector General - Health Program Integrity and Recovery Act**

FOR the purpose of establishing the Office of the Inspector General in the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; providing for the authority, duties, and powers of the Office; ~~prohibiting certain acts by providers; describing certain provider duties; providing for penalties and sanctions for violating certain prohibited acts; granting a provider notice and an opportunity to be heard; providing a person with an award, civil immunity, and protection from~~