

SECTION 2. 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 1994.

Approved May 2, 1994.

**CHAPTER 269**

**(House Bill 439)**

AN ACT concerning

**Health Maintenance Organizations-- 24-Hour Emergency Telephone Hotline: Access**

FOR the purpose of requiring a health maintenance organization to ~~have a~~ provide 24-hour emergency telephone hotline for its members that is staffed at all times by ~~an employee of the health maintenance organization for a certain purpose.~~ access by telephone to a person who is able to appropriately respond to calls from members and providers concerning after-hours care; providing that this Act may not be interpreted to require preauthorization for certain services; and providing for a delayed effective date.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article - Health - General

Section 19-705.1(b)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(1990 Replacement Volume and 1993 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

**Article - Health - General**

19-705.1.

(b) The standards of quality of care shall include:

(1) A requirement that a health maintenance organization shall provide for regular hours during which a member may receive services, including providing for services to a member in a timely manner that takes into account the immediacy of need for services;

(2) (i) A requirement that a health maintenance organization shall have a system for providing a member with 24-hour access to a physician in cases where there is an immediate need for medical services, ~~INCLUDING A 24 HOUR EMERGENCY TELEPHONE HOTLINE THAT IS STAFFED AT ALL TIMES BY AN EMPLOYEE OF THE HEALTH MAINTENANCE ORGANIZATION TO RECEIVE CALLS FROM MEMBERS CONCERNING MEDICAL EMERGENCIES INCLUDING PROVIDING 24-HOUR ACCESS BY TELEPHONE TO A PERSON WHO IS ABLE TO APPROPRIATELY RESPOND TO CALLS FROM MEMBERS AND PROVIDERS CONCERNING AFTER-HOURS CARE;~~