May 13, 2019

The Honorable John F. McKeon, Chair
Assembly Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee
221 Main Street
Madison, NJ 07940

Testimony in Support of A4455

"Requires health insurance carriers to adhere to certain practices to protect health information related to sensitive services."

Dear Chairman McKeon and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies, Inc. (NJAMHAA), I want to thank you for the opportunity to offer comments in support of Assembly Bill 4455 which would protect sensitive medical information. NJAMHAA supports the protections as set forth in the bill.

NJAMHAA represents 144 hospital-based and freestanding non-profit mental health and substance use treatment providers. Our membership represents organizations in every county and almost every community statewide. Collectively, our member organizations help 500,000 children and adults with mental health and substance use issues annually.

Individuals with a mental illness and/or substance use disorder are entitled to confidentiality regarding the treatment they receive. Both federal and state law extend many protections to such information but explanation of benefit (EOB) forms circumvent their intent. Standardization of EOBs and permitting individuals to have them redirected instead of being sent to a policyholder would correct that. It would also encourage individuals to seek treatment that otherwise would not for fear of their medical information being shared with others.

NJAMHAA strongly supports A4455 and urges all members of the Committee to vote yes on this bill. As always, we remain available to address any questions you may have regarding this bill or other behavioral health issues. Please feel free to contact me at 609-838-5488 extension 292 or at dwentz@njamhaa.org.

Sincerely,

Debra L. Wentz, Ph.D.
President and CEO