2023 Legislative Agenda

**AzHHA Priorities**

**Improvements to the Credentialing Process**
AzHHA will lead an effort to strengthen the 2018 credentialing legislation by shortening the timeframe for new providers to be enrolled with the plans; requiring retroactive payments from the time a completed application is submitted to the plans; and creating an enforcement tool via civil penalties as outlined in other areas of statute for state regulated plans. Members have indicated the 2018 legislation did not result in intended improvements to the credentialing process. Delays in credentialing remain, which have resulted in patients being unable to access care in their communities, the hospital absorbing significant uncompensated care costs, or the patient potentially paying for services out-of-pocket even though the patient has a payor source.

**Fixing OTC Licensure Issue**
AzHHA will pursue a technical correction to 2022 legislation (HB 2450) that made changes to outpatient treatment center (OTC) licensure. The legislation was originally intended to offer hospitals flexibility for licensure of their OTCs, but as drafted, the law requires changes to governance structures that could impact Medicare billing. AzHHA will lead the effort to amend the language to align with the original intent—to allow hospital OTCs to be licensed as they deem appropriate: to come under the hospital single group license; to be independently licensed; or to be exempt from licensure.

**AzHHA Supported Efforts**

**Health Plan Accountability**
AzHHA will support efforts from partners in the provider community to address problematic health plan practices that unnecessarily delay patient access to care or compromise fair and timely payment for providers. Some of these efforts may include creating a fair hearing process for the commercial insurance plans to mirror the process that exists for Medicaid plans at the Arizona
Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS). Other efforts may include prior authorization (PA) reform to reduce burdens on providers by creating a “gold card” statute, exempting providers with a high percentage of PA approvals on a particular medication or procedure from future PA requirements for that medication or procedure. AzHHA will also support efforts to address practices by other entities like pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs). These problematic practices include “white bagging” and patient steering.

Enhancing Access to Medically Necessary, Cost-Effective Care

AzHHA will support efforts to authorize the continuation AHCCCS, which is subject to their eight-year sunset review in 2023. AzHHA will also support the addition of covered services to AHCCCS members, including speech therapy for adults, an important service often provided during post-acute care or to patients recovering from strokes. AzHHA will also support adding an adult dental benefit to the list of covered services through AHCCCS. Members have indicated that routine dental care would help reduce emergency department visits for patients with acute dental needs, which often lead to secondary infections and additional complications.

AzHHA Defense

Consistent with prior years, AzHHA will oppose legislation that negatively impacts hospital operations, hospital finance, or evidence-based best practices.