

# Addition to 2026 Plan Certification Standards

---

Johanna Fabian-Marks, Deputy Executive Director

July 21, 2025

# Proposal

- **Add new 2026 plan certification standard to maintain AV de minimis ranges from PY2025 for PY2026 for on-Exchange individual market plans**
  - Promote market stability and reduce uncertainty
  - Respond to late-breaking federal regulations
  - Maryland's plan review process is already underway for PY2026

# Background (1/2)

- February 18, 2025: MHBE Board finalized 2026 Plan Certification Standards
  - Value Plan standards for 2026
  - Require equivalent cost-sharing for primary care and mental health/substance use disorder office visits and encouraging a copay structure for cost-sharing
- June 20, 2025: CMS finalized 2025 Marketplace Integrity and Affordability Rule
  - Includes widening of the actuarial value de minimis ranges for PY2026 for individual and small group plans
  - Result: plans can be less generous and still meet AV requirements

## Background (2/2)

- **Actuarial value** (AV) is the percentage of total average health care costs that a plan is expected to cover for a typical enrollee.
  - 60% for Bronze plans, 70% for Silver plans, 80% for Gold plans, 90% for Platinum plans
- **“De minimis” ranges**: how much a plan can vary from the specified AV for each metal level
  - Example: under 2025 rules, a Silver plan could have an AV between 70% and 72% to meet federal requirements; under 2026 federal rules, a Silver plan may have an AV as low as 66%.
  - MHBE’s proposal means that in Maryland, the AV floor for this example (on-Exchange Silver plan) would remain at 70%, and so on.

# On-Exchange Individual Market AV Ranges

<b>Metal Level</b>	<b>PY 2026 Federal</b>	<b>Proposed PY 2026 MD On-Exchange (same as PY 2025)</b>
Expanded Bronze (60% AV)	<b>56% - 65%</b> (-4/+5)	<b>58% - 65%</b> (-2/+5)
Silver (70% AV)	<b>66% - 72%</b> (-4/+2)	<b>70% - 72%</b> (0/+2)
Silver 73% AV	<b>72% - 74%</b> (-1/+1)	<b>73% - 74%</b> (0/+1)
Silver 87% AV	<b>86% - 88%</b> (-1/+1)	<b>87% - 88%</b> (0/+1)
Silver 94% AV	<b>93% - 95%</b> (-1/+1)	<b>94% - 95%</b> (0/+1)
Gold (80% AV)	<b>76% - 82%</b> (-4/+2)	<b>78% - 82%</b> (-2/+2)
Platinum (90% AV)	<b>86% - 92%</b> (-4/+2)	<b>88% - 92%</b> (-2/+2)

# Rationale for Maintaining 2025 AV Ranges for the Individual Market

- Maintain the relevance of metal levels as a consumer shopping tool by preserving differentiation between metal levels
- Support market stability
  - More likely to maintain consistent plan designs from 2025 to 2026
  - Reduce upward pressure on net premiums for subsidized consumers
- Unsubsidized consumers can still purchased plans with wider AV ranges off-exchange

# Public Comment

- MHBE sought public comment June 23 - July 11, 2025
- Received two comments:
  - Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative: support maintaining the PY2025 AV de minimis ranges for PY2026 to protect Marylanders' health, maintain market stability, and reduce uncertainty. Also support maintaining the proposed de minimis ranges past PY2026.
  - United Healthcare: request flexibility to not change the designs of the plans they have already filed, some of which have AVs lower than what would be allowed under this standard. Assert that providing low AV options promotes affordability for consumers who prioritize low premium over plan generosity.

# Next Steps

- If the Board votes to approve this standard, it will be considered final and in effect for PY2026.
- Any carrier that has already filed plans with the MIA under the assumption that the AV de minimis range provision in the Marketplace Integrity and Affordability Rule would be finalized as proposed will need to submit updated plan filings



# Request for Approval of Additional 2026 Plan Certification Standard

MOTION: I move to [approve/defer/reject] the AV de minimis ranges for individual market on-exchange health plans for plan year 2026 [as presented] *or* [as amended].