

# Minority-owned clinic sues Optum Maryland and State over healthcare discrimination

*Second lawsuit claims Optum Maryland's discrimination and mismanagement caused \$680,000 in damages to a minority-owned healthcare provider.*

BALTIMORE, MD, UNITED STATES,  
November 19, 2024 /

EINPresswire.com/ -- [Justly Prudent](#) recently announced the filing of a major civil rights lawsuit against Optum, Inc., United Behavioral Health, Inc., and the State of Maryland, alleging systematic discrimination and financial misconduct that has pushed a vital minority-owned healthcare provider to the brink of closure.



The [complaint](#), filed on behalf of Omnis Health Life, LLC, a minority and 100% service-disabled Gulf War veteran-owned clinic, challenges the Defendants' gross mismanagement of Maryland's Public Behavioral Health System and discriminatory practices that disproportionately harm minority-owned healthcare providers serving vulnerable populations.

According to the complaint, since January 2020, Optum's dysfunctional claims processing system and discriminatory practices have resulted in over \$680,000 in wrongfully withheld reimbursements from Omnis Health. The systematic failures have forced the clinic to reduce its patient capacity from 250 to 112 clients and terminate its Intensive Outpatient Program, a critical service for Baltimore's vulnerable populations.

"This case exposes a deeply troubling pattern of discrimination and mismanagement within Maryland's Public Behavioral Health System that threatens access to essential mental health and addiction treatment services in our most underserved communities," said Attorney Jordan D. Howlette, who represents Omnis Health. "What makes this situation particularly egregious is that while minority-owned clinics faced systematic denial of claims and aggressive recoupment

actions, similarly situated White-owned facilities received preferential treatment with nearly identical billing practices."

The lawsuit alleges that Maryland failed to properly vet Optum's qualifications or test its claims processing system before its January 2020 launch, leading to an immediate and catastrophic failure that has persisted for nearly five years. Despite having knowledge of these systemic problems, Maryland declined to assess approximately \$20.5 million in contractual damages against Optum and recently began withholding 100% of federal vendor payments owed to Omnis Health based on unsubstantiated debt calculations.

Omnis Health seeks compensatory and punitive damages, as well as injunctive relief to prevent further discrimination and ensure equal treatment of minority-owned healthcare providers. The complaint includes claims under Section 1 of the Civil Rights Act of 1866 (codified as 42 U.S.C. § 1981), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and various state law claims.

This case is Omnis Health Life, LLC v. Optum, Inc., et al., (Case No. C-24-CV-24-003920) filed in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City, Maryland.

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