

MedChi

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TO: The Honorable John A. Hurson, Chairman
Members of the House Committee on Health and Government Operations
The Honorable Dan K. Morhaim

FROM: Joseph A. Schwartz, III
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise

DATE: February 18, 2004

RE: **SUPPORT CONCEPT** – House Bill 557 – *Advance Directive Availability Act*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi) which represents over 7,200 Maryland physicians and their patients supports the concept of House Bill 557.

Advance Directives play an important role in assuring that persons can communicate their desires with respect to critical health care decisions in advance so that when they are not able to do so, their wishes can be honored. While the use of advance directives has increased dramatically in recent years, there remains a significant percentage of the population who have not been informed about advance directives, their benefits, or how they operate. House Bill 557 creates an obligation for the dissemination of information about advance directives by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Motor Vehicle Administration and insurers. The bill specifies the information to be provided and requires the entities that distribute the information to collect certain statistics.

MedChi applauds the sponsor's efforts to expand access to information about advance directives but is not able to assess whether the approach reflected in this bill is the best means to expand access to this information and achieve the sponsor's objective. To that end, MedChi defers to the Committee to determine how best to enhance access to information about advance directives.

For more information call:

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