



The Maryland State Medical Society

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WILL THE 2014 MARYLAND ASSEMBLY ELECTION BE KNOWN AS THE YEAR OF THE PHYSICIAN?

Op-ed in Center Maryland, by Dr. Gene Ransom

BALTIMORE, June 15, 2014 — Physicians are rarely elected to the Maryland General Assembly. In the past twenty-five years only three physicians have served in the Maryland General Assembly: Delegate Rose Mary Bonsack, MD, (serving from 1991-1999), State Senator Andrew Harris, MD, (serving from 2003-2011), and Delegate Dan Morhaim, MD, who has served since 1995. This year could be different --- an unprecedented number of physicians are running for office, including challenging seats in the House of Delegates and Senate of the Maryland General Assembly.

It is conceivable that in 2014 more physicians will be elected to the General Assembly than have been in the last twenty-five years. Maryland has over fifteen physicians on the current ballot, and seven credible candidates for the Maryland General Assembly.

In Baltimore County, Delegate Dan Morhaim, MD, should sail to re-election in District 11. This long-time member of the General Assembly has balanced politics, volunteering at Healthcare for the Homeless, and treating people in the emergency room for nearly twenty years. He may be joined by Jay Jalisi, MD, a Democrat running for House of Delegates in a tough, newly drawn District 10. Dr. Jalisi is an ear, nose, and throat physician who is not in practice, and currently works with non-profits.

In Howard and Baltimore Counties' District 12, physicians make up two front-runners for delegate seats as Clarence Lam, MD, and Terri Hill, MD, lead the pack in endorsements and fund-raising. All three incumbents in this district decided not to run. [A recent Baltimore Sun article](#) did a great profile on this race. Both physicians have strong ties to the Democratic Party as Terry Hill, MD, has picked up key endorsements from the retiring delegates and the current state senator; and Dr. Lam is currently an elected member of the Democratic Central Committee. Terry Hill, MD, is a plastic and reconstructive surgeon with a practice in Columbia. Clarence Lam, MD, is a board-certified physician in preventive medicine at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and serves as the assistant program director of the preventive medicine residency program. Both have good chances to win.

On the Eastern Shore in District 37B, Rene Desmarais, M.D. is running to replace one of two open seats vacated by two incumbent Delegates running for higher office. Dr. Desmarais, a Republican, is a partner at Peninsula Cardiology Associates in Salisbury. The five physicians running for the House are joined by two physicians who are attempting to win races to the State Senate of the Maryland General Assembly.

Hugh Hill, MD, is hoping to be a Senator from Montgomery County. Dr. Hill has a tough race against Delegate Susan Lee for Senator Brian Frosh's open seat in Montgomery County. Dr. Hill is an emergency physician and an instructor at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center. In District 42, Baltimore County, Tim Robinson, MD, is a Republican running for Maryland State Senate. Dr. Robinson is an anesthesiologist at St. Joseph Medical Center in Towson. Robinson is

unopposed in the Republican primary, and will face the winner of the Dejuliis – Brochin primary.

As if the physicians running for the General Assembly weren't exciting enough for the physician community, medical doctors are also running for Congress, Orphans Court, and even party central committees in various counties. A complete list of medical doctors running for office can be found at www.medchi.org.

For the past four years Delegate Morhaim, MD, would often open speeches to the medical community with the line "I'm the only physician in the General Assembly" -- it looks like that refrain may need to be retired next session.

About MedChi

MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is a non-profit membership association of Maryland physicians. Formed in 1799, it is still the largest physician organization in Maryland today. The mission of MedChi is to serve as Maryland's foremost advocate and resource for physicians, their patients and the public health of Maryland. For more information, please visit www.medchi.org.