

MedChi

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TO: The Honorable Maggie McIntosh, Chairman
Members, House Environmental Matters Committee
The Honorable Donald Elliott

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

DATE: February 2, 2010

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 140 – *Bicycles, Mopeds, and Motor Scooters – Minors – Protective Headgear*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents over 7,300 Maryland physicians and their patients, supports House Bill 140.

House Bill 140 amends the bicycle helmet safety law that requires minors under the age of 16 to wear a helmet when riding a bicycle. The legislation increases the age requirement of the current helmet law from 16 to 18, in line with the traditional definition of “minor”. The bill also includes “moped” in the definition of bicycle and extends the requirement for helmet use to motor scooters.

House Bill 140 is a logical extension of the current helmet law which has resulted in a decrease in the incidence of head trauma and death in children. Head injuries are a common cause of death and disability in children and teens and extending this important safety law to teens between 16 and 18 will further reduce the incidence of childhood death and injury. Similarly, mopeds and motor scooters pose a significant risk of injury, in some ways a higher risk than bicycles, given the fact that they are motorized and can travel at significant speeds. Passage of House Bill 140 is prudent public policy supported by evidence of the effectiveness of the current law. MedChi urges a favorable report.

For more information call:

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