

MedChi

The Maryland State Medical Society

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TO: The Honorable Ulysses Currie, Chairman
Members, Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

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

DATE: March 3, 2010

RE: **OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED** – Senate Bill 141 – *Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2010*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents over 7,300 Maryland physicians and their patients, opposes Senate Bill 141 unless it is amended.

The BRFA Bill removes \$.5 million from the Board of Physicians Fund (Physicians Fund) established under the Health Occupations Article in FY 2010 (p. 27) and \$1.0 million in FY 2011 (p. 30). The Physicians Fund collects physician license fees which are designed to be used for programs to license and regulate Maryland's physicians. Physicians in Maryland already pay one of the highest license fees in the country and the accumulation in the Physicians Fund results from the fact that the Board of Physicians has been unable to use the funds to hire necessary personnel. At the same time, the Board of Physicians has been criticized for not processing complaints against physicians in a timely manner, a problem which has occurred because employee positions have been "frozen" and adequate personnel cannot be assigned to handle the regulatory matters entrusted to the Board of Physicians.

Senate Bill 141 is concerned principally with reducing monies previously promised to various state funded programs. However, the monies in the Physicians Fund have never been allocated and are not being reduced but rather are being "appropriated." If this occurs, the Board of Physicians will be forced to raise additional monies from Maryland's physicians.

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The Physicians Fund is a repository for license fees and should not be considered General Fund revenue available for purposes beyond the licensing function. MedChi would respectfully urge that the forced appropriation of \$1.5 million total from the Physicians Fund be removed from Senate Bill 141.

For more information call:

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cc: Governor's Legislative Office