

# MedChi

*The Maryland State Medical Society*

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TO: The Honorable Peter A. Hammen, Chairman  
Members, House Health & Government Operations Committee  
The Honorable Shane Pendergrass

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

DATE: February 24, 2011

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS** – House Bill 784 – *Medical Records – Health Information Exchanges*

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The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents over 7,300 Maryland physicians and their patients, supports House Bill 784 with amendments.

House Bill 784 makes several changes which will ensure the ultimate success of Maryland's Health Information Exchange (Exchange). The Exchange will serve as the "backbone" of Maryland's emerging Electronic Health Records (EHR) technology. EHR holds the promise of better and more complete medical care for all Maryland citizens.

House Bill 784 addresses several critical issues for the Exchange. First, all insurance companies that are using EHR are required to connect to the Exchange (page 6, lines 5 through 12). Additionally, the bill provides that the existence of the information on the Exchange does not change the standard of care applicable to a doctor in treating a patient (page 6, lines 24 thru 25). This is important so a doctor is not held liable for health information of which he was unaware at the time of treatment.

House Bill 784 attempts to protect the privacy of protected health information on the Exchange by providing that the Maryland Health Care Commission may adopt regulations for the privacy and security of such information (page 5, lines 11 thru 27). In this respect, MedChi believes that House Bill 784 is very deficient. MedChi believes that

The Honorable Peter A. Hammen, Chairman  
House Bill 784  
Page Two

page 5, lines 18 thru 19 should be stricken and replaced with the following language:  
“(B) NEITHER THE MARYLAND HEALTH CARE COMMISSION NOR THE EXCHANGE MAY ADOPT REGULATIONS OR POLICIES WHICH ALLOW FOR THE SALE OR LICENSING OF PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION OBTAINED BY A HEALTH INFORMATION EXCHANGE.”

MedChi believes that health data has considerable commercial value even where it has been “scrubbed” of personal identification. Government entities such as the Exchange should not be in the business of the licensing or sale for commercial use of such information, even when “scrubbed.” Rather, the government agencies should only use such information for research and policy purposes. The MedChi amendment will insure that the privacy of this health information is protected into the future.

With this amendment, MedChi would ask for a favorable report on House Bill 784.

**For more information call:**

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