

MedChi

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TO: The Honorable Peter A. Hammen, Chairman
Members, House Health & Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Shawn Z. Tarrant

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

DATE: March 3, 2011

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 974 – *Health Insurance – Preauthorization of Health Care Services – Use of Electronic Health Records*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents over 7,300 Maryland physicians and their patients, supports House Bill 974.

House Bill 974 provides that if a doctor uses an electronic health record (EHR) to request “preauthorization for a health care service or prescription” that the insurance carrier must make a decision on that request within 4 hours.

However, even when passed, House Bill 974 will not take effect until the doctor’s EHR “...IS CONNECTED TO THE STATE – DESIGNATED HEALTH INFORMATION EXCHANGE OR SERVICE BY A STATE - DESIGNATED MANAGEMENT SERVICE ORGANIZATION...” (p.2, ll 17-21). Since the State – designated exchange is not currently operational and will not likely be operational for a considerable period of time, House Bill 974 will not take effect until the Exchange is operational.

One of the promises of EHR is that medical treatment can be more efficient in the future. Moreover, medical treatment can be more complete since an EHR system allows a doctor (or an insurance company) to have immediate availability of all of a patient’s medical information in order to make a proper and informed decision on treatment. House Bill 974 seeks to increase the efficiency of the preauthorization procedure.

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Just as email has quickened response times in business, so EHR will quicken response times in medicine. MedChi would ask for a favorable report on House Bill 974.

For more information call:

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