

TO: The Honorable Brian E. Frosh, Chairman
Members, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
The Honorable Kathy Klausmeier

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

DATE: March 10, 2011

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 708 – *Mopeds and Motor Scooters – Titling, Registration, Insurance, and Required Use of Protective Headgear*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents over 7,300 Maryland physicians and their patients, and the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAA), a statewide association representing more than 1,100 pediatricians and allied practitioners in the State, support the requirements for protective headgear use included in Senate Bill 708.

Senate Bill 708 incorporates a moped and motor scooter within the definition of a vehicle and a motor vehicle, and as such, requires a moped and motor scooter to be titled and registered and the driver of a moped and motor scooter to possess a specified class of driver's license and required security generally in the form of a vehicle liability insurance policy. In addition, the bill requires an individual who rides or operates a motor scooter or moped to wear protective headgear. MedChi and MDAAP take no position on the registration, insurance or licensure provisions of the bill but strongly support the requirements for protective headgear use.

Maryland has long required the use of protective headgear when operating motorcycles. The cost-saving evidence is uncontroverted and extensively documented. Helmet laws save lives and money. For example, traumatic brain injury is the most common injury associated with motorcycle, motor scooter and moped accidents. Individuals with traumatic brain injuries often receive care in nursing homes, chronic hospitals, and State psychiatric institutions due to a lack of funding for community-based services. These services are extremely expensive and individuals are often underinsured or uninsured and, therefore, the cost of their care is borne by the public through uncompensated care. Individuals enrolled in the Medicaid program for treatment from traumatic brain injury also receive residential and day habilitation and supported employment services which are costly.

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Cost savings alone is not the sole justification for the extension of the current helmet law to minors operating motor scooters and mopeds reflected in Senate Bill 708. Injuries needlessly suffered as a result of a failure to wear proper protective headgear produce health consequences which impact not only the future of the injured child but also the child's family and community. It is a personal and societal cost that is unnecessary. MedChi and MDAAP urge the Committee to adopt the provisions of Senate Bill 708 that require the use of protective headgear.

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