

MedChi

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TO: The Honorable Joan Carter Conway, Chairman
Members, Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee
The Honorable Kathy Klausmeier

FROM: Joseph A. Schwartz, III
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J. Steven Wise

DATE: March 9, 2011

RE: **OPPOSE** – Senate Bill 713 – *Pharmacists – Administration of Vaccines - Regulations*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents over 7,300 Maryland physicians and their patients, opposes Senate Bill 713.

Senate Bill 713 repeals the requirement that the State Board of Physicians, the State Board of Nursing and the State Board of Pharmacy jointly develop and adopt regulations regarding vaccine administration by pharmacists. It permits the Board of Pharmacy to develop these regulations by itself and only to “consult” with the other Boards. MedChi believes the deletion of the requirement for joint development of regulations jeopardizes the health and safety of the public.

The statute requires the prescription of a physician in order for a pharmacist to administer the vaccines authorized in statute or in regulation. The pharmacist is also required to inform the physician after the vaccine has been administered. Clearly these provisions indicate that physician involvement is essential to the pharmacists’ role in immunization administration. Removal of the Board of Physicians in the promulgation of regulations will eliminate the assurance that any regulations developed will anticipate the aspects of vaccine administration and management that should continue to involve the active participation of the physician who is under the jurisdiction of the Board of Physicians.

Furthermore, the statute provides for the potential expansion of the vaccines a pharmacist may administer. The Board of Pharmacy should not be permitted to expand the

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vaccines they are authorized to provide without the explicit agreement of the Board of Physicians. There are significant medical issues associated with any given vaccine and its administration. Simple consultation by the Board of Pharmacy with the other Boards will not assure that an adequate assessment of the benefits and risks of expansion of the vaccines a pharmacist may administer is conducted.

There is no evidence that the current statutory structure for defining and regulating pharmacists' ability to administer vaccines is "broken." It was a carefully crafted balance, recently enacted, which continued. Absent evidence of a systemic deficiency in the provision of immunizations attributed to the requirement for joint development of regulations by all three professional boards, Senate Bill 713 should receive an unfavorable report.

For more information call:

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