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TO: The Honorable Sheila A. Hixson, Chairman
Members, House Ways & Means Committee
The Honorable Jay Walker

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

DATE: March 15, 2012

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 1080 – *Education – Student Athletes – Heat Acclimatization Guidelines*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents over 7,600 Maryland physicians and their patients, supports House Bill 1080.

House Bill 1080 requires the Maryland State Department of Education, in conjunction with interested and affected agencies and relevant health care providers, to develop a model policy for preseason-practice heat acclimatization guidelines for student athletes. Further, it requires local boards of education to adopt the guidelines and specifies certain parameters that must be included in the guidelines.

In recent years, there has been increased press coverage of “heat-related” illnesses and death among young athletes. The proliferation of these events has resulted in a number of studies that suggest that heat acclimatization appears to be one of the best strategies for reducing the risk of heat illness. This legislation will bring the relevant parties to the table to develop model guidelines heat acclimatization that can then be adopted by the local school boards.

There has already been work done in this area that can serve as a basis for the development of Maryland’s guidelines thereby reducing the resources necessary to accomplish the bill’s objectives. In 2009, the National Athletic Trainers’ Association released a “Consensus Statement” crafted by the collaborative effort of several national organizations involved with sports medicine issues and youth athletics. Those guidelines can

serve as a template of the work anticipated by this legislation.

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Adoption of heat acclimatization guidelines will serve to educate student athletes, parents, coaches, athletic trainers, medical professionals and school staff on measures that can reduce the risk of heat related illness and preventable death. A proper plan is an essential component to minimize the risk associated with heat and physical activity. House Bill 1080 provides a reasonable framework for the enhance protection of our young athletes. MedChi urges a favorable report.

For more information call:

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