

MedChi

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

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

DATE: March 7, 2013

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** – House Bill 931 – *Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Telemedicine*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents over 7,500 Maryland physicians and their patients, supports House Bill 931 with an amendment.

House Bill 931 will extend current Maryland law as applies to health insurance carriers to the Maryland Medicaid program. Specifically, House Bill 931 requires the Medicaid program to “reimburse” a health care provider for telemedicine services in the same manner as if the service had been delivered in person. It is clear that the delivery of medical services by telemedicine is occurring on an exponential basis and is of particular value in accessing specialist care. Apparently, Maryland Medicaid is willing to acknowledge this with respect to rural locations seeking access to Maryland’s academic centers. However, Maryland Medicaid does not believe that telemedicine should be “reimbursed” if the patient is proximately located near the telemedicine consultant. Frankly, MedChi does not understand this distinction. The advantage of telemedicine is that the access can occur immediately rather than requiring the patient to make another appointment at another place at another time.

MedChi would ask for one amendment to House Bill 931 and that is to replace the word “reimburse” with the word “pay.” The fact is that doctors are not “reimbursed” by health insurance companies but are “paid” for services already delivered. MedChi believes that the use of the word “reimbursed” is misleading in that a doctor is not being “reimbursed” as if he or she were filing an expense account but rather is being “paid” for services delivered. With this amendment, MedChi urges a favorable report on House Bill 931.

For more information call:

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