

# MedChi

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**TO:** The Honorable Joseph F. Vallario, Jr., Chairman  
Members, House Judiciary Committee  
The Honorable Geraldine Valentino-Smith

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

**DATE:** March 19, 2013

**RE:** **SUPPORT** – House Bill 1185 – *Criminal Law – Second Degree Assault – Health Care Practitioners*

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The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents over 7,600 Maryland physicians and their patients, supports House Bill 1185.

House Bill 1185 would make it a second-degree felony to assault a health care practitioner while in the performance of his or her duties, subjecting the offender to imprisonment not exceeding 10 years or a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or both. Current law imposes this same penalty against anyone who assaults a law enforcement officer or parole or probation agent.

MedChi believes this legislation provides important protection to physicians, nurses, physician's assistants and other health care practitioners, in particular those that work in emergency rooms and trauma centers. Such facilities are where victims of abuse, assault, and other physical violence are taken, and occasionally an incident that began in another location is continued there, but with the health care practitioner(s) caught in the middle while trying to provide care. Likewise, individuals who are drunk or impaired by controlled dangerous substances and brought to a health care facility for care sometimes act out against the provider. The current misdemeanor penalty for such actions is insufficient to deter such actions by the offender in our view.

For these reasons, MedChi urges the Committee to support House Bill 1185.

**For more information call:**

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