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TO: The Honorable Brian E. Frosh, Chairman
Members, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
The Honorable Dolores Kelley

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

DATE: January 30, 2013

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 109 – *Criminal Law – Controlled Dangerous Substances – Research – Synthetic Cannabinoids*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the Maryland Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians, and the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics wish to voice their support for Senate Bill 109 which codifies “synthetic cannabinoids” to the State’s Schedule I controlled dangerous substances and adds several specific chemical substances that are considered cannabimimetic agents.

Synthetic cannabinoids are rapidly becoming a significant public health challenge. They are chemically engineered substances that are similar to the active ingredients in marijuana and produce a similar effect when smoked or ingested. They have become a popular alternative to marijuana, particularly with youth and have been linked to tachycardia, seizures, hallucinations and other responses commonly found with drug abuse.

Senate Bill 109 adds to Schedule I, the Schedule for controlled dangerous substances, several chemical compounds known as synthetic cannabinoids. Designation of these chemicals as Schedule I drugs will effectively ban them in Maryland as Schedule I cannot be prescribed, manufactured, possessed, dispensed, imported, exported or sold. These substances have no safe use, present a high potential for drug abuse and should be banned from the marketplace.

The research language that is included in this legislation should be noted. There may be legitimate research being conducted on these chemicals. Failure to include the proposed research language could inadvertently prohibit or negatively impact

The Honorable Brian E. Frosh
Senate Bill 109
Page Two

these research efforts. To that end, the Committee should verify that the proposed research language is drafted appropriately to ensure the objective of the bill does not create unintended consequences for legitimate research. The Committee is urged to work with those institutions that can properly craft the language to insure the intended objectives of the legislation are achieved. With the research issue noted, a favorable report is requested.

For more information call:

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