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

FROM: Joseph A. Schwartz, III
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
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DATE: March 26, 2013

RE: **LETTER OF INFORMATION** – Senate Bill 114 – *Health – Pregnant Women – Hepatitis B Testing*

On behalf of MedChi, the Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi) and the Maryland Section of the American Congress of Obstetrics and Gynecology (MDACOG), we offer this letter of information on Senate Bill 114.

Senate Bill 114 proposes to require Hepatitis B testing of all pregnant women. The members of both MedChi and MDACOG support Hepatitis B testing of pregnant women as it reflects the current standard of care employed by obstetrician/ gynecologists and hospitals. It is standard protocol to test women for Hepatitis B and virtually all women are now tested for Hepatitis B. There is no evidence that women are opting out of the test. Hepatitis B can be transmitted from mother to child at the time of birth. Therefore, identification of Hepatitis B in a pregnant woman allows health care practitioners to appropriately treat the child upon delivery.

While testing pregnant women for Hepatitis B is important, MedChi and MDACOG take no position on this legislation because they remain significantly concerned about legislating the practice of medicine into law. There are many critical tests and treatments that are given or performed as standard protocol and they cannot all be legislated. Furthermore, the types, methods and protocols for testing change with the advancement of medical science consequently, statutory language that was once current can become outdated or contradictory to current practice.

MedChi and MDACOG strongly support the sponsor's commitment to Hepatitis B testing for all pregnant women and echo the importance of that testing but take no position on its incorporation into law due to the above stated concern.

For more information call:

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