

MedChi

The Maryland State Medical Society

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TO: The Honorable Peter A. Hammen, Chair
Members, House Health & Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Kelly Schulz

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

DATE: February 25, 2014

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** – House Bill 1282 – *Public Health – Drug Overdose Deaths – State and Local Fatality Review Teams*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents more than 8,000 Maryland physicians and their patients, supports House Bill 1282 with amendment.

House Bill 1282 proposes to establish a State and Local Fatality Team for drug overdose deaths, in many ways analogous to the State and local child fatality review teams and the local domestic violence review teams. Deaths from drug overdose are a significant public health problem. The factors that contribute to such deaths are often complicated and challenging to evaluate given the complications that the criminal nature of drug activity adds to efforts to understand and systemically address those factors. Gathering information alone is challenging if not impossible given the fear of prosecution that arises with many of these cases.

MedChi supports further consideration of the approach to addressing these deaths that is proposed in House Bill 1282. The success of the child fatality review teams is noteworthy and may be able to be replicated in these circumstances. While MedChi is not well-versed in the nuances of drug overdose death evaluations and cannot comment on many of the specific provisions of the bill, it would like to register its support for careful consideration of this proposal. It would make one technical note: the bill includes team members recommended by the “Maryland Chapter of the American Medical Association.” Should this Committee choose to advance this concept, the correct name of the organization is MedChi, the Maryland State Medical Society. With its technical correction noted, MedChi supports the approach outlined in House Bill 1282.

For more information call:

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