

MedChi

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TO: The Honorable Peter A. Hammen, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Barbara A. Robinson

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

DATE: March 5, 2015

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** – House Bill 574 – *State Board of Physicians - Physicians, Physicians Assistant, and Allied Health Practitioners – Licensure Requirements*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents more than 8,000 Maryland physicians and their patients, supports House Bill 574, with amendment.

House Bill 574 requires the Board of Physicians to conduct a criminal history records check on all applicants for physician licensure, as well as allied health professionals.

MedChi has supported this effort in the past, although it has raised concern with the frequency of repeating the background checks. That concern appears to have been addressed in House Bill 574, which sets forth on page 6 at lines 9-13, what is referred to as the “wrap back” provision of the law. This provision requires the Central Repository to report any new information to the Board and the individual licensee. In this way, new criminal information that might affect the physician’s qualifications for licensure is made known to the physician and to the Board, without requiring the physician to repeat the background check on any regular basis.

The only amendment that MedChi would suggest is that the “nature of the crime” be added to the list of factors that the Board consider. While the bill requires consideration of the “circumstances” surrounding the crime, adequate consideration should be given to the nature of the crime as well. For example, an isolated disorderly conduct charge against a person while a junior in college should clearly be viewed differently than a felony committed while an adult. The amendment gives the board a better ability to make that distinction.

Finally, MedChi does have some concern that, following the first license renewal cycle after implementation of the law, the volume of background checks may be more than the Central Repository can handle in a timely manner. This is important because the window of time to process a physician renewal application is limited. However, the Board has been advised by the Central Repository that this will not be an issue, and the Board has advised MedChi of the same.

For these reasons, MedChi supports House Bill 574.

For more information call:

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