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TO: The Honorable Peter A. Hammen, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Eric M. Bromwell

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
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DATE: March 3, 2015

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT**– House Bill 896 – *Maryland Opioid Use Disorder Consortium*

On behalf of the Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP), the Maryland Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians (MDACEP) and the Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers (MACHC), we support House Bill 896, with amendment.

House Bill 896 establishes the Maryland Opioid Use Disorder Consortium comprised of representatives of the General Assembly, State agencies and relevant stakeholders to comprehensively address Maryland's escalating incidence of substance abuse, drug diversion and overdose death. The Consortium is charged with the development of a strategic statewide plan to treat and reduce opioid use disorders in the State that includes a timeline for future action.

The Consortium's initial deliberations will be conducted through five substantive workgroups that will focus on distinct but integral subject matter components, that are essential to the development of an effective strategic plan. The identified workgroups will consider: the prescription drug monitoring program; prescriber and provider education; treatment; public education and awareness; and data analysis.

The Consortium will also seek technical assistance from the National Governor's Association and other appropriate entities to develop the strategic statewide plan and will roundtable across the State to receive input from local officials and experts to refine, expand, or modify the initial recommendations for the strategic statewide plan. Additionally, the Consortium will also coordinate with State agencies, organizations, and existing programs to maximize the impact of established initiatives and tools to treat or reduce opioid use disorders.

The Consortium is required to submit an initial report, with recommendations for the strategic statewide plan by January 1, 2016. By January 1, 2017, the Consortium is required to report on the finalized strategic statewide plan, as well as any recommendations for legislative action to implement the plan.

While the State has undertaken a number of important initiatives to begin to address this significant public health crisis, there has not been a coordinated effort to develop a comprehensive

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strategic plan that assures that the State is maximizing the effectiveness and coordination of its various intervention policies and programs. House Bill 896 provides a comprehensive approach for achieving that objective.

The above organizations would request however that the Department of Juvenile Services be added to the Consortium membership as well as physicians with expertise in pain management and a practitioner whose expertise is adolescent health issues. These additions are critical to the development of an effective comprehensive plan, as the issues relevant to adolescent substance abuse, overdose and effective intervention often differ significantly for those related to and/or appropriate for adults. Furthermore, while it is critical that we aggressively address substance abuse and overdose, it should not be done at the expense of ensuring adequate access to appropriate pain management services for individuals suffering from acute and/or chronic pain.

With its noted amendments, the above named organizations strongly support the passage of House Bill 896.

For more information call:

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