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TO: The Honorable Sheila E. Hixon, Chair
Members, House Ways and Means Committee
The Honorable Mark S. Chang

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman

DATE: January 28, 2016

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 29 – *Education – Participants in Youth Sports Programs – Concussions – Penalties for Coaches*

On behalf of the Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi) and the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP), we support House Bill 29.

Maryland has been a leader in proactively developing requirements for educating coaches and parents about the identification of and risks associated with concussions. Maryland has also adopted requirements for youth athletes to be removed from play if there is any suspicion that a concussion may have occurred. Once removed from play, a youth athlete can only be returned to play after clearance by a licensed health care provider trained in the identification and treatment of concussions. MedChi and MDAAP were actively involved in the enactment of these requirements and believe they are critical to protecting the health of our young athletes.

It is important to note that the effectiveness of the program is dependent upon coaches complying with the requirements associated with removal from play and limitations on the return to play once removed. Current law does not specify what actions may be taken if a coach fails to comply with program requirements. House Bill 29 remedies that shortfall by providing for the imposition of penalties on coaches who fail to comply with program requirements. The penalties are graduated based on the pattern and history of infractions and there are due process provisions that enable a coach to refute/appeal a sanction. MDAAP and MedChi believe it is important to ensure that coaches are adherent to the program requirements. The coaches should be subject to consequences that place their privilege to coach at risk if they fail to take the actions necessary to help protect their athletes from the consequences associated with concussions. A favorable report on House Bill 29 is requested.

For more information call:

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