

MedChi

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TO: The Honorable Peter A. Hammen, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Sheree Sample-Hughes

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
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DATE: February 2, 2016

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 216 – *Public Health – Preventative Medical Care – Consent by Minors*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents more than 7,600 Maryland physicians and their patients, supports House Bill 216.

House Bill 216 provides an important clarification of the intended provisions of Maryland's minor consent law related to sexually transmitted disease. Currently Maryland permits minors to consent to a specific set of health care services that reflect circumstances and conditions where a minor may fail to access services because they do not wish to inform their parents or guardian of the need for services or their parent or guardian is a factor in the need for services. These consent provisions were enacted a number of years and in the case of the provision related to sexually transmitted disease, does not reflect the current range of conditions or options for care. The proposed language will ensure that health care providers can treat the full range of sexually transmitted diseases and infections including the provision of preventative services and counseling that is the standard of care in addressing sexually transmitted disease and infection.

Of particular note is HIV. While the overall incidence of HIV has declined, Maryland remains one of the leading states in the nation for new cases of HIV, a large percentage of which is attributable to young adults and adolescents. There are effective interventions for HIV prevention that should be available to minors who are at risk for HIV but would not access care if they were required to gain consent. The statute permits the physician, with or without the approval of the minor, to provide the parent or guardian information about the care needed or provided to the minor if in the professional judgment of the physician it will serve the needs of the minor. Therefore, the law ensures the long term health needs of the minor are taken into consideration even with granting authority for initial consent to care. MedChi urges a favorable report.

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