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## **MEDCHI, The Maryland State Medical Society 2011 Legislative and Regulatory Agenda**

- **SCOPE OF MEDICAL PRACTICE:** MedChi will fight to assure that all patients have access to physicians and that physician extenders have appropriate training and physician oversight. The new federal health reform law will place unprecedented demands as hundreds of thousands of newly insured individuals seek doctors. It is important that these new patients find doctors and that non-doctors do not use this as an opportunity to increase scope of practice without adequate education and training.
- **MEDICAL LIABILITY REFORM:** MedChi will:
  - Oppose trial lawyer attempts to increase the “cap” on damages in medical malpractice cases;
  - Support efforts to establish a pilot project for specialized health courts;
  - Study the continued efficacy of the Maryland Health Claims Arbitration system given the current fiscal environment;
  - Support efforts to limit repeated continuances in medical malpractice cases.
- **PUBLIC HEALTH:** MedChi will advocate for continued improvements to Maryland’s public health.
  - Work to remove criminal penalties directed at physicians who fail to comply with an order of the Governor during a public health emergency;
  - Ensure that alcohol tax increase revenues are dedicated to health care or public health programs;
  - Support legislation to mandate ignition interlocks on cars of drivers convicted of driving under the influence of alcohol;
  - Support passage of Uniform Emergency Volunteer Health Practitioners Act so as to allow out of state doctors to assist in public emergencies;
  - Work to establish annual “Check Your Medicine Cabinet” Disposal Day.
- **PHYSICIAN PAYMENT AND INSURANCE REFORM:** MedChi will continue its efforts to improve Maryland’s reimbursement climate with several initiatives:
  - Resist the attempt of health insurers to repeal last year’s passage of the Assignment of Benefits (AOB) bill which will take effect on July 1<sup>st</sup>;
  - Oppose legislation that will allow insurers to change a prescription without a physician’s approval, on the basis of the cost of the drug;
  - Persuade federal officials to approve a .1% assessment on hospital rates to support a State Loan Assistance Repayment Program for graduating medical students;
  - Seek the passage of a Joint Resolution in the Maryland General Assembly asking Congress to enact legislation to allow collective bargaining for physicians so as to counterbalance the overwhelming power of the health insurance companies;

- Initiate appropriate legislation to provide the Maryland Insurance Administration (MIA) with full jurisdictional authority over ERISA plans and Blue Card plans operating in Maryland.
- Work to amend Maryland's Electronic Health Records (EHR) law to direct health insurance carriers to reimburse physicians not only for the cost of implementing EHR but for maintaining such records on an ongoing basis. Continue support of privacy protection for EHR.
- **MEDICAID AND THE UNINSURED:** MedChi will continue to protect the integrity of the Medicaid program with respect to eligibility and benefits and to accommodate the program to the hundreds of thousands of new patients who will be enrolled as a result of the federal health reform law.