



*The Maryland State Medical Society*

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## **MEDCHI ASKS HOSPITALS AND PHYSICIANS TO ADJUST STANDING ORDERS TO MINIMUM AMOUNT OF OPIOIDS NECESSARY**

BALTIMORE, October 5, 2017 – The nation is experiencing an opioid epidemic. The Centers for Disease Control has reported that 91 Americans die every day from an opioid overdose, which includes deaths from prescription opioids. Additionally, Governor Hogan declared a state of emergency and asked for an “all-hands-on-deck” approach to end this epidemic. In response to the growing crisis, MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society has formed the Opioid Task Force to educate Maryland physicians on safe opioid prescribing practices, how to recognize risk factors, and when to recommend alternative, scientifically-based or evidence-based non-opioid treatments.

The first item on the Opioid Task Force’s agenda was to ask physicians and hospitals to review the automated controlled substance “standing orders” within and throughout the electronic health record (EHR) ordering systems because the EHR system may populate standing orders automatically as options for recommended dosages. Gary Pushkin, M.D., MedChi President explains, “The Opioid Task Force has sent letters to Maryland hospitals and physicians suggesting that either (1) the physicians’ standing orders be reduced to the minimum dosages and quantities necessary or (2) that practices remove any automated dosage and quantity in the physicians’ EHR ordering system.” The Opioid Task Force has asked physicians, administrators, hospitals, and clinics to work together to adjust standing orders that are higher than necessary, or to remove the automatic feature. Pushkin states, “This small adjustment could help prevent patients from receiving a higher dosage or quantity than necessary, and may prevent diversion or other problems.”

The Opioid Task Force also reminded physicians that all physicians who prescribe opioids were to be registered with the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) by July 1, 2017. This program monitors physicians’ opioid prescribing practices and compares physicians according to specialty. While the Board of Physicians cannot mine the data, other parties like dispensers, insurers, and the Maryland PDMP program, have access to the data and are actively tracking this information.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Opioid Crisis or Opioid Task Force, please contact MedChi at 410-539-0872 or [yshapiro@medchi.org](mailto:yshapiro@medchi.org).

### About MedChi

MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is a non-profit membership association of Maryland physicians. It is the largest physician organization in Maryland. The mission of MedChi is to serve as Maryland’s foremost advocate and resource for physicians, their patients and the public health of Maryland. For more information, please visit [www.medchi.org](http://www.medchi.org).