



*The Maryland State Medical Society*

News: For Immediate Release  
Additional Information Contact:  
Gene M. Ransom, CEO  
Office: 410-539-0872 x 3305

## **MEDCHI RELEASES 2020 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA**

BALTIMORE, December 23, 2019 – As the statewide professional association for licensed physicians, MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is dedicated to our mission to serve as Maryland's foremost advocate and resource for physicians, their patients, and the public health. MedChi will work on a wide range of objectives during the 2020 General Assembly Session that are in line with the mission of MedChi.

Sarah Merritt, M.D., Co-Chair of MedChi's Legislative Council, states "much of MedChi's legislative advocacy priorities are driven by efforts to reduce physician stress by easing administrative burdens such as prior authorization."

MedChi will work to protect access to physician services. In order to do this, MedChi will advocate that the Fiscal Year 2021 Medicaid budget fund E&M reimbursement rates equal to the Medicare program to better support physician participation in the Medicaid program and ensure that Medicaid patients have equal access to physician services. MedChi will oppose policies that would adversely affect patient care by inappropriately expanding the scope of practice of non-physician providers beyond their education and training. MedChi will also fight initiatives to weaken Maryland's current medical liability environment and jeopardize Maryland's Total Cost of Care Model.

Another goal of MedChi is to ensure timely delivery of health care services and payment. MedChi will support initiatives that promote greater transparency of utilization management and physician rating system policies used by health insurance carriers and working to lessen administrative burdens placed on physician offices for authorizing services and obtaining payment. MedChi will work to improve Maryland's payment climate by ensuring that gain-sharing and other mechanisms for system reform include broad physician participation and provide appropriate physician incentives. There will also be support of initiatives that address drug price transparency, network adequacy and further standardizing credentialing requirements, and the ability of physicians to dispense medications to patients and to prepare medications without unreasonable equipment and credentialing requirements.

MedChi will also focus on protecting the practice of medicine by monitoring the regulatory and disciplinary actions of the Board of Physicians and support legislation altering the disciplinary process and working to further examine credentialing requirements to ensure fairness.

MedChi will advocate to address behavioral health treatment and recovery needs. We will push for expansion of Maryland's crisis treatment centers throughout the State and address access to care barriers for behavioral health treatment; to protect the integrity of the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program and its use by physicians as a prescribing tool; and support the innovative approaches to addressing the opioid crisis such as the establishment of a pilot supervised injection facility.

Lastly, MedChi will work to strengthen public health initiatives. MedChi will invest in programs to address health disparities and the social determinants of health including, homelessness and affordable housing, encouraging needle exchange sites, and providing education and referral for HIV PrEP. We will also advocate for a range of child health and safety initiatives which include: repealing religious exemption for immunizations, requiring background checks and gun safety educational courses for long guns, and increasing HPV immunization rates for children.

Benjamin Lowentritt, M.D., Co-Chair of MedChi's Legislative Council, states "our mission directly informs our advocacy efforts and drives us to pursue a broad spectrum of initiatives that directly impact Maryland's patients and public health in addition to our physician members."

The complete 2019 Legislative Agenda can be found at <https://www.medchi.org/Law-and-Advocacy/2020-Legislative-Session>.

#### 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).