

MedChi

The Maryland State Medical Society

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TO: The Honorable Guy Guzzone, Chair
Members, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
The Honorable Bryan W. Simonaire

FROM: J. Steven Wise
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
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Christine K. Krone

DATE: March 10, 2022

RE: **SUPPORT**– Senate Bill 716 – *Maryland Health Care Workers Loan Assistance Program – Establishment and Funding*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, **supports** Senate Bill 716.

Senate Bill 716 establishes a loan assistance program for a numerous licensed health care workers in Maryland by setting aside \$35 million in fiscal years 2024-2026. Eligible workers can obtain up to \$10,000 toward loan repayment. The program is limited to those who practiced continuously in the State prior to January 1, 2021, to ensure that this program is directed to those who served in our State during the COVID-19 pandemic and not to those who more recently entered the workforce.

A recent study conducted by the Workgroup on the Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program for Physicians and Physician Assistants found that the average medical school graduate is carrying a loan balance of \$200,000. In too many cases this debt becomes a disincentive to enter the lower paying medical specialties, such as primary care, because the economics are simply too difficult to overcome, and physicians instead enter higher paying specialties. Incentives like loan assistance are important tools the State can use to combat this problem, even if it is only for a limited timeframe.

For these reasons, MedChi supports Senate Bill 716.

For more information call:

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