

MedChi

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TO: The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Pat Young

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
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Richard A. Tabuteau

DATE: February 28, 2020

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 611 – *Baltimore County – Behavioral Health – Hub and Spoke Pilot Program*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, **supports** House Bill 611.

House Bill 611 provides a framework for the development of a “Hub and Spoke” pilot program in Baltimore County in order to enhance access to behavioral health services, and specifically opioid use disorders. The goal of the model is minimizing barriers to treatment by offering ongoing opioid use disorder treatment that is fully integrated with general health care and wellness services. The model uses an individualized approach to opioid use disorder treatment, including health integration principles, case management, counseling services, and peer support; and increases participation of community-based spoke providers in managing and monitoring buprenorphine treatment for ongoing maintenance.

Access to and treatment of behavioral health disorders, particularly opioid use disorders continue to be the focus of significant policy debate as the opioid crisis continues to escalate. The Hub and Spoke Pilot Program proposed by House Bill 611 will provide Maryland the opportunity to establish a program that is similar to other initiatives that have proven to be successful in Vermont and other areas and evaluate its effectiveness before determining whether it should be expanded Statewide and under what framework.

MedChi strongly supports authorizing Baltimore County to develop the proposed program. It presents an excellent opportunity to explore creative and effective ways to address behavioral health needs. A favorable report is requested.

For more information call:

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