

# 2021 LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY VICTORIES

As the statewide professional association for licensed physicians, MedChi is dedicated to our mission to serve as Maryland's foremost advocate and resource for physicians, their patients, and the public health.



Shannon Pryor, MD, *MedChi President*

MedChi is in the trenches every day advocating for the needs of all Maryland physicians, both members and nonmembers, and our patients. In critical times such as these, MedChi has proven to be a strong and effective voice of reason focused on improving physicians' ability to provide the best possible medical care for the patients for whom we care.



Loralie Ma, MD, *MedChi President-Elect*

MedChi's legislative priorities emphasize the protection of physicians and physician practices, so they can best care for their patients.

Protection of Medicaid reimbursement, protection against blanket cuts to Medicare reimbursement, and continued availability for telehealth services for patients protects our ability as physicians to care for all patients.

## FOR THE 2021 MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE SESSION, **MEDCHI** ACHIEVED SIGNIFICANT VICTORIES ON BEHALF OF ALL MARYLAND PHYSICIANS AND PATIENTS:

### **MEDCHI PROTECTED ACCESS TO PHYSICIAN SERVICES AND THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE**

- Successfully lobbied for an increase of \$92 million in the state budget to maintain Medicaid physician E & M Codes reimbursement rates bringing us closer to full parity between Medicaid and Medicare.
- Successfully advocated for an additional \$3.2 million for FY2022 to fund the extension of Medicaid coverage for pregnancy.
- Recommended solutions for increased affordable coverage to improve health equity for uninsured or under-insured Marylanders.
- Committed to monitoring the costs of the Maryland Reinsurance Program and future funding needs.

### **MEDCHI ENSURED TIMELY DELIVERY OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES AND PAYMENT**

- Collaborated successfully as part of a coalition to pass telehealth legislation that will continue payment for and access to telehealth post-pandemic, including audio-only telehealth.
- Successfully opposed legislation to authorize downstream risk arrangements between carriers and physicians in order to allow the physician community a greater opportunity over the interim to discuss the model and ensure that proper protections are built into any such arrangements.

# MedChi

*The Maryland State Medical Society*

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Willarda Edwards, MD  
AMA Board of Trustees Member  
& MedChi Past President

MedChi works every day on behalf of our members, non-members, and patients across Maryland. We work closely with our component medical societies, as well as nationwide organizations like the American Medical Association (AMA), to help our members and all physicians effectively. Legislative advocacy is a large part of this work.



Michele Manahan, MD  
MedChi Immediate Past President

As we continue to deal with staggering health care challenges, patients need doctors more than ever. In turn, doctors need to be able to practice the art and science of medicine. MedChi preserves those abilities through strong advocacy for patients and physicians in the State of Maryland.



## FOR THE 2021 MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE SESSION, **MEDCHI** ACHIEVED SIGNIFICANT VICTORIES ON BEHALF OF ALL MARYLAND PHYSICIANS AND PATIENTS:

### **MEDCHI PROTECTED THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE**

- Once again defeated legislation advanced by podiatrists which would have allowed them to use the deceptive term “podiatric physician.”
- Once again defeated the persistent efforts by the naturopaths to gain prescriptive authority that would endanger patients.
- Defeated legislation authorizing a pharmacist to order and administer laboratory tests without an authorized prescription.

### **MEDCHI ADDRESSED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TREATMENT AND RECOVERY NEEDS**

- Successfully lobbied to decriminalize possession of drug paraphernalia used to inject, ingest, inhale or otherwise administer a controlled dangerous substance.
- Successfully lobbied to require the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to include mental health first aid as one of the behavioral health services for eligible veterans.
- Defeated legislation that would have added substance use disorder to the list of criteria for granting an individual a certification for involuntary admission for admittance to a VA hospital or other facility.
- Successfully lobbied to enhance and expand Maryland’s crisis response system by strengthening requirements for partnerships with community services that include family members, consumer advocacy organizations, and regional stakeholders.

### **MEDCHI STRENGTHENED PUBLIC HEALTH INITIATIVES**

- Helped establish a framework for the establishment of Health Equity Resource Communities (HERC) in areas of Maryland with demonstrated health inequities and disparities.
- Successfully advocated to authorize an employer to file a petition for a peace order of an employee who alleges violence against another employee in the employer’s workplace.
- Successfully lobbied to strengthen the testing thresholds for elevated levels of lead in school drinking water outlets that threaten the health of children.

### **MEDCHI ADDRESSED REGULATORY ADVOCACY IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

- Supported a framework that would make it easier for school-based health centers to offer telehealth.
- Successfully defeated legislation that would have authorized out-of-state physicians and other practitioners to register to provide telehealth services in Maryland without a requirement for licensure in the state.

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