

MedChi

The Maryland State Medical Society

1211 Cathedral Street
Baltimore, MD 21201-5516
410.539.0872
Fax: 410.547.0915

1.800.492.1056

www.medchi.org

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

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

DATE: January 26, 2022

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 32 – *Mental Health Law – Petitions for Emergency Evaluation – Electronic Record*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, **supports** House Bill 32.

House Bill 32 amends the Emergency Evaluation portion of the Mental Health law. Currently, a lay person seeking an emergency petition to have an individual evaluated must appear in court so that a judge can determine whether probable cause exists to evaluate that individual. Alternatively, a licensed health professional can sign the petition. In both circumstances, the result is a petition, which is then presented to a peace officer, who must take the individual to an emergency facility for evaluation.

The current law does not expressly allow for the petition to be in electronic form. House Bill 32 would change that. This would allow, for example, a licensed health professional to transmit the petition to the peace officer electronically, rather than physically having to deliver the petition over some distance. In short, the bill brings the law into the 21st century and allows the use of electronic transmission of the petition.

MedChi urges the Committee's support for House Bill 32.

For more information call:

J. Steven Wise
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
Danna L. Kauffman
Christine K. Krone
410-244-7000