



The Maryland State Medical Society

Our Priority:

SCOPE OF PRACTICE



Non-physicians regularly turn to the Maryland General Assembly to expand their “scope of practice.”

In the last few years, for example, podiatrists have sought to become “podiatric physicians,” naturopaths have sought to prescribe prescription drugs, and pharmacists continually seek to provide medical care and counseling and to prescribe more and more medications. Often, non-physician groups are using the argument that their enhanced scope of practice is necessary to provide patients with increased “access” to care. But this is the wrong solution.

Physicians are the most educated and highly trained medical professionals because in addition to 4 years of medical school, they complete a medical residency not required of any other profession. Residency is a period of intense training lasting between 3 and 7 years, depending on the specialty.

Issue	MedChi Advocacy
Prioritizing the number of practitioners over the quality of care.	Access to care is important, but increasing the quantity of non-physician practitioners should not be considered a substitute for ensuring quality of care.
Unsupervised practitioners cannot provide the highest levels of care	When there is a reasonable argument that increased “access” is necessary, the role of non-physicians should be enhanced only when they are supervised by or in collaboration with a physician who is trained in the particular medical area.
Physician workforce shortages should be addressed with more physicians	The Commission to Study the Healthcare Workforce Crisis in Maryland was established in 2022 by the General Assembly to examine shortages across the industry, and MedChi is using this forum to educate policymakers about the need for more physicians as a solution to the problem, not expanding the scope of non-physicians.
Support physician education to increase the workforce	MedChi is working to continue to increase funding for the Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program for Physicians as an incentive for physicians, who often face hundreds of thousands of dollars in medical school debt, to practice in underserved areas of our State.

Call or e-mail [your legislators](#) and members of the Senate Finance Committee and the House Health and Government Operations Committee and ask them to look unfavorably on “scope of practice” expansions by non-physicians and to question the proponents as to why they should be exempt from the rigorous education and training that is required of physicians. Learn more at www.medchi.org/YourAdvocate.