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House Health Committee
March 3, 2026
House Bill 1109 – *Public Health Reform Act*
POSITION: SUPPORT

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, **supports** House Bill 1109.

This is a comprehensive bill that largely builds upon and continues the work and recommendations of the Maryland Commission on Public Health (COPH), which issued its final report in September 2025. There are a number of important components of the bill, including the building of a statewide volunteer public health corps; expanding local health authority; streamlining decision-making; updating COPH's structure and oversight role; creating dedicated funding and planning tools for strengthening Maryland's public health workforce; and requiring future laws to consider their impact on health equity.

MedChi supported the establishment of the COPH and participated in its work, including providing feedback and recommendations for inclusion in the final report. This bill helps ensure the recommendations of the COPH are implemented rather than become a report that sits on the shelf. Of particular interest to MedChi is ensuring that information is shared effectively across the State's health care spectrum. COPH's report and bill take strides toward ensuring that health records can be shared among the health care system and local health departments, which helps coordinate care and achieve better outcomes. To that end, we were pleased to learn that a representative of the Chesapeake Regional Information System (CRISP) will be included in the COPH's working group going forward.

The COPH report included several recommendations emphasizing the importance of using CRISP to coordinate information across the health care system. The report highlights the importance of CRISP as Maryland's centralized health information exchange. It emphasizes the need to augment CRISP to ensure it serves as the primary statewide repository for structured data from multiple secure, approved sources, including healthcare providers, health departments, social service providers, and other relevant entities. Overall, the report underscores CRISP's role in improving data sharing, accessibility, and interoperability to enhance public health planning, decision-making, and service delivery across Maryland.

Continuing the work of the COPH through this bill will help to ensure these recommendations, and many others contained in the report, are put into action. We request a favorable report on House Bill 1109.

For more information call:

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