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Senate Finance Committee
January 30, 2025

Senate Bill 129 – *Public Health – Maryland Commission on Health Equity – Advisory Committee and Hospital Reporting*

POSTION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, supports with amendment Senate Bill 129, which establishes a Health Equity Measures Advisory Committee under the Maryland Commission on Health Equity.

It is well recognized that racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to experience poor health outcomes as a consequence of their social determinants of health, including access to health care, education, employment, economic stability, housing, public safety, and neighborhood and environmental factors. Addressing health inequalities has long been a priority for the Maryland General Assembly. In 2021, the Maryland Commission on Health Equity was created and charged with developing a “health equity framework” to examine ways for state and local government agencies to collaborate to implement policies that will positively impact the health of residents of the state.

The Health Equity Measures Advisory Committee established in Senate Bill 129 will strengthen the effectiveness of the Commission in meeting its objectives. The Advisory Committee is charged with determining the 10 widest disparities in health care quality, access, or outcomes for vulnerable populations. The bill also requires hospital systems to annually submit comprehensive health equity reports to the Department of Health with a clear delineation of the information to be provided in the reports. The Health Equity Advisory Committee is charged with reviewing the health equity reports and making recommendations to the Department.

Creation of the Advisory Committee will provide the Commission with data that is essential to effectively addressing health inequities in the State. MedChi strongly supports the creation of the Advisory Committee but believes the work of the Committee would be strengthened with the addition of a member that represents MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society. Active participation by the physician community will enhance the data collection and analysis of the Committee. MedChi requests the bill be amended to add a MedChi representative. With its amendment noted, a favorable report is requested.

For more information call:

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In Section 13-4308(A)(2)(II) of the bill, insert a new number 7 as follows:

7. ONE INDIVIDUAL FROM MEDCHI REPRESENTING THE PHYSICIAN COMMUNITY.