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Senate Finance Committee
January 30, 2025

Senate Bill 215 – *Cannabis – On-Site Consumption Establishments and Cannabis Events*
POSITION: OPPOSE

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, opposes Senate Bill 215. This bill establishes rules and requirements regarding the licensing and operation of on-site consumption of cannabis. The bill also establishes new registration and permits for “cannabis events” where a temporary registration is issued by the Maryland Cannabis Administration (the “MCA”). Cannabis Events are defined as events that involve the consumption of cannabis products by individuals on the premises of the event. The consumption of edible cannabis products and cannabinoid beverages may be consumed at such events. The events may be conducted over 48 hours and 4 consecutive days.

MedChi urges the Committee to exercise caution regarding approving new authority for cannabis events. Cannabis edibles and beverages pose unique public health challenges due to their delayed onset of effects, which can lead to unintentional overconsumption. Unlike inhaled forms of cannabis, the effects of edibles and beverages may take 30 minutes to two hours to manifest and can last for several hours after onset. During this delay, individuals may mistakenly believe they have not consumed enough and ingest additional doses, resulting in excessive intake. This poses a serious risk, especially in a public event where peer pressure and social dynamics may influence consumption behaviors. The delayed onset and potential for overconsumption are significant contributors to cannabis-related emergency room admissions. Overconsumption of edibles can lead to adverse effects, such as severe anxiety, paranoia, and, in some cases, psychosis.

MedChi appreciates that this bill seeks to establish a regulated framework for cannabis use at these events, including age restrictions, alcohol restrictions, requirements for following manufacturing standards, laboratory testing, and packaging and labeling standards. However, we feel that this bill's public health protections are not strong enough. Any legislation on this topic must include strong public health safeguards, recognizing the risks of delayed onset and provide necessary resources, such as medical assistance and emergency services.

MedChi would be happy to work with the sponsors of this legislation to ensure that public health and safety measures are fully incorporated into this policy proposal. However, given the number of concerns we have with the bill as introduced, MedChi respectfully requests an unfavorable report.

For more information call:

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