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Senate Finance Committee
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Senate Bill 561 – *Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Community Violence Prevention Services – Reimbursement and Provision of Services*
POSITION: SUPPORT

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, **supports** Senate Bill 561.

Medicaid is the largest public insurance program in the United States, making it ideal as an entry point for offering community violence prevention services. Research indicates that among victims of gunshot wounds, nearly two out of three patients are either on Medicaid or uninsured. A 2021 federal General Accounting Office report reported that initial gun injuries cost hospitals more than \$1 billion a year. When costs related to physician fees are included, the cost increases by another 20%. By requiring Medicaid coverage regardless of delivery setting, Senate Bill 561 removes barriers that may currently limit access for patients who may be at high risk for retaliation, transportation challenges, or other safety concerns. Telehealth flexibility is particularly important for reaching individuals in underserved communities.

MedChi supports the bill's establishment of certification and training standards for violence prevention professionals. Ensuring that services are delivered by qualified individuals strengthens accountability, quality, and integration with the broader health care system. At the same time, the bill removes hospital affiliation requirements, enabling community-based organizations to provide interventions while maintaining appropriate oversight.

Violence prevention is crucial to keeping Maryland communities safe and healthy. Prevention also saves public funds from being spent on the community and medical aftermath of violent interactions. For these reasons, MedChi urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 561.

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