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American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™
Maryland Chapter



TO: The Honorable Bobby A. Zirkin, Chair
Members, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
The Honorable Nathaniel T. Oaks

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
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DATE: March 1, 2018

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 801 – *Environment – Reduction of Lead Risk in Housing – Elevated Blood Lead Levels*

We submit this letter on behalf of the Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi) and the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP), in **support** for Senate Bill 801.

Lead poisoning in children has been a public health concern for decades. Maryland has been a national leader in addressing exposure to lead since the establishment of the Lead Poisoning Prevention Program in 1994. The Program established a comprehensive plan to regulate compensation for children who are poisoned by lead paint, treat affected residential rental properties to reduce risks, and limit liability of landlords who act to reduce lead hazards in accordance with various regulatory requirements. As a result of the Program and other initiatives, Maryland has dramatically reduced lead poisoning.

Despite the State's success in reducing children's exposure to lead there remain many children at risk. Currently the protections of the program apply to children who demonstrate an elevated blood lead level of 10 micrograms per deciliter. Senate Bill 801 proposes to lower the elevated blood lead level from 10 to 5 micrograms per deciliter, thereby increasing the number of children who would be identified as having an elevated blood lead level, triggering the protections of the program.

According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there is no safe level of lead exposure, and adverse health effects exist in children at blood lead levels less than 10 micrograms per deciliter. Since 2012, CDC has urged health care providers and authorities to

follow up on any young child with a level as low as 5 micrograms per deciliter. CDC is no longer using the 10 micrograms per deciliter level or referring to a “level of concern.” The new reference level of 5 micrograms per deciliter represents the blood lead levels of children (ages one through five) in the highest 2.5 percentiles for blood lead levels.

Passage of Senate Bill 801 will bring Maryland into conformity with CDC recommendations and enhance the State’s commitment to aggressively identify and address elevated blood levels in children. Adoption of the lower standard will significantly improve the ability to prevent the serious health consequences associated with lead poisoning. MedChi and MDAAP urge a favorable report.

For more information call:

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