

# MedChi

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TO: The Honorable Thomas M. Middleton, Chair  
Members, Senate Finance Committee  
The Honorable Stephen S. Hershey, Jr.

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
J. Steven Wise  
Danna L. Kauffman  
Richard A. Tabuteau

DATE: March 1, 2018

RE: **SUPPORT**– Senate Bill 1056 – *Rural Health Collaborative Pilot*

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On behalf of the Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi) and the Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers (MACHC), we submit this letter of **support** for Senate Bill 1056.

Senate Bill 1056 establishes a *Rural Health Collaborative Pilot* under the Maryland Department of Health (MDH). The proposed pilot emanates from the Rural Health Care Delivery Workgroup which was created through legislation in 2016 to oversee a study of health care delivery in the mid-shore region and to develop a plan for meeting the areas health care needs. The workgroup membership reflected a broad range of stakeholders all of whom had an impact upon or were impacted by the access and system delivery challenges faced by residents of the midshore region. MedChi and Choptank Health, the FQHC in the mid shore region that served on behalf of MACHC were active participants throughout the deliberations of the workgroup.

The workgroup deliberations resulted in the issuance of a report that included a number of consensus recommendations including the establishment of a rural health collaborative to oversee the development and establishment of a rural community health complex program. The report defined a number of objectives for the community health complex program which included but were not limited to the identification of needs in the region, including the pockets of special needs within the counties; the development of strategic directions for improvement of health in the region; and the establishment of collaborative working relationships between health systems and independent providers in order to integrate clinical health needs with social, behavioral, and environmental needs that impact health and clinical outcomes as well as integrate

the work of local organizations into broader regional initiatives.

MedChi and MACHC strongly support the implementation of the proposed pilot program reflected in Senate Bill 1056. It will provide the State an opportunity to explore creative mechanisms to ensure that rural areas of the State are able to establish comprehensive, integrated and responsive health care delivery systems that can provide appropriate access to high quality, cost effective health care services to the residents of their region. A favorable report is requested.

**For more information call:**

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