

MedChi

The Maryland State Medical Society

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TO: The Honorable Joan Carter Conway, Chair
Members, Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
The Honorable Stephen W. Lafferty

FROM: Pam M. Kasemeyer
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DATE: April 5, 2017

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 270 – *Environment – Testing for Lead in Drinking Water – Public and Nonpublic Schools*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents more than 7,000 Maryland physicians and their patients, **supports** House Bill 270.

House Bill 270 will require the Department of the Environment in consultation with the Maryland State Department of Education to develop regulations that would require public and nonpublic schools to test their drinking water outlets for the presence of lead.

Lead poisoning creates significant permanent health and developmental consequences. Children exposed to lead can develop brain damage, learning disabilities, behavior problems, and difficulties with speech that have long-lasting implications. Maryland has been a leader in addressing lead poisoning associated with exposure to lead paint in rental housing. House Bill 270 provides an excellent mechanism to assist the State in preventing lead poisoning associated with another potential source of lead exposure – drinking water in schools. By regularly screening the drinking water our school-aged students consume, the State will be able to preemptively address lead exposure thereby preventing the significant implications associated with lead poisoning.

Lead-contaminated drinking water is not just an inner-city phenomenon. Reports have asserted there may be elevated lead levels in drinking water associated with public schools in Baltimore, Frederick, and Montgomery counties. The state of Maryland has a long tradition of turning out high achieving public school students. Maryland's commitment to education excellence should not be undermined by preventable exposure to lead in drinking water which will, if not addressed, result in disabilities that will prohibit success. MedChi urges a favorable report on House Bill 270.

For more information call:

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