

MedChi

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TO: The Honorable Kumar Barve, Chair
Members, House Environment and Transportation Committee
The Honorable Shane Robinson

FROM: Gene Ransom

DATE: February 15, 2017

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** – House Bill 602 – *Keep Antibiotics Effective Act of 2017*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents more than 7,000 Maryland physicians and their patients, **supports** House Bill 602, **with amendment**.

Antibiotic resistant bacterial infections are a serious concern for individuals, communities and our health care delivery system. Humans, particularly children and those with reduced immune systems, are at increased risk of acquiring many of these infections with resistant bacteria and are at great risk of severe complications if they become infected. Judicious use of antimicrobial agents in humans will be insufficient to curb the accelerating upward trend in resistance. The largest nonhuman use of antimicrobial agents is in food-animal production. The uses of antimicrobial agents in food-producing animals, if not properly regulated, will have a direct negative impact on human health and multiple impacts on the selection and dissemination of resistance genes in animals and the environment.

In 2012, the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) issued guidance which established principles for judicious use of antimicrobial drugs in the feed and drinking water of food-producing animals. The FDA determined that judicious use of medically important antimicrobial drugs is important to minimize resistance development and preserve their effectiveness as therapies for humans and animals. The 2012 FDA guidance considered the use of antimicrobial drugs in animal feed or water for the treatment, control, and prevention of specific diseases, as uses that are necessary for assuring animal health therefore, making them appropriate uses. The guidance recommends veterinary oversight or consultation.

It is critical that use of antimicrobial drugs in the feed and drinking water of food-producing animals be limited to essential judicious uses if we are to curb the accelerating trend in antibiotic resistance that is placing individuals, communities and the health care delivery system at risk. House Bill 602 is a step in the right direction but fails to include a number of provisions that will ensure that Maryland's agricultural industry is in compliance with the law and that the State has good data on the

use of antibiotics in animals so that it can evaluate and appropriately respond from a public health perspective. To that end, MedChi urges the Committee to adopt amendments that would: (1) establish a transparent, comprehensive and actionable data collection framework within the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) to collect data and analyze such data in collaboration with universities, cooperative agreements, and other stakeholders with relevant expertise; (2) ensure public transparency of veterinary prescriptions and farm operations for effective feedback; and (3) restrict the routine use of antibiotics with very limited or no exemptions and with DHMH providing oversight, feedback, and enforcement. With its amendments noted, MedChi urges a favorable report.

For more information call:

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