



The Maryland State Medical Society

News: For Immediate Release

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MEDCHI, THE MARYLAND STATE MEDICAL SOCIETY, TO FOCUS ON CHILD SAFETY SEAT REFORM

BALTIMORE, January 27, 2012 – MedChi, the Maryland State Medical Society announced today they will seek legislation to strengthen child safety seat requirements in Maryland. Gene M. Ransom, CEO of MedChi, explained “We are requesting changes that will protect children by bringing Maryland law into conformance with federal standards. Child passenger safety has radically evolved over the last decade and Maryland’s current child safety seat requirements do not meet current Federal recommendations.”

Joseph Berk, M.D., MedChi member and Maryland pediatrician, stated “failure to properly restrain children in motor vehicles is a leading cause of injury and death in children, particularly under the age of 16. Maryland has been a leader in advancing motor vehicle safety policies yet Maryland’s current child safety seat requirements fail to recognize current standards.”

In March 2011, the American Academy of Pediatrics released its revised Child Passenger Safety recommendations with the intent to educate parents on the best practices to protect their children from death or injury while riding within a vehicle:

- Infants and toddlers should ride facing the rear of the vehicle until at least 2 years of age. States may choose to adopt age 1 requirements immediately, and phase in a requirement to ride rear-facing until age 2 within 2 to 4 years, with provision for educating parents in the interim about the benefits of riding rear-facing as long as possible.
- Young children should ride in car safety seats with a harness until at least age 4.
- School-aged children should ride in belt positioning booster seats until at least age 8 or until the seat belt fits correctly.
- Children should ride in the rear-seat until age 13.
- Seat belt laws should apply to all vehicle occupants and should be subject to primary enforcement.

MedChi is very aware of this issue and its importance for our children and is a firm supporter of this legislation. MedChi urges you to contact members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings and House Environmental Matters Committees and ask them to sponsor and support legislation. MedChi would like to thank the sponsors of the legislation: Senator Jennie Forehand of Montgomery County and Delegate Dana Stein of Baltimore County for all of their support on this important matter.

About MedChi

MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is a non-profit membership association of Maryland physicians. It is the largest physician organization in Maryland. The mission of MedChi is to serve as Maryland's foremost advocate and resource for physicians, their patients and the public health of Maryland. For more information, please visit www.medchi.org.