

MedChi

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TO: The Honorable Peter A. Hammen, Chairman
Members, House Health & Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Samuel Rosenberg

FROM: Joseph A. Schwartz, III
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise

DATE: February 23, 2010

RE: **OPPOSE** – House Bill 742 – *Medical Treatment – Homeless, Abandoned, and Runaway Youth*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents over 7,300 Maryland physicians and their patients, opposes House Bill 742.

This legislation will enable a homeless shelter employee or other health care provider to certify that a minor over the age of 12 is homeless, abandoned or a runaway for purposes of enabling the minor to access medical treatment without adult consent. MedChi would assert that minors in such circumstances should be referred to the appropriate social service agencies to ensure that all of the minor's needs are addressed, not just medical care. If the minor needs immediate medical attention, current law provides for the ability of a health care professional to provide treatment without consent if the provider believes the failure to provide care will jeopardize the life and health of the minor.

The intention of the legislation is notable but its passage may result in the failure to more comprehensively address the needs of a minor who presents for medical care alleging homelessness, abandonment, or as a runaway without providing any additional access to treatment that is not now afforded under current law. MedChi requests an unfavorable report.

For more information call:

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