

MedChi

The Maryland State Medical Society

1211 Cathedral Street
Baltimore, MD 21201-5516
410.539.0871
Fax: 410.547.0915

1.800.492.1056

www.medchi.org

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

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

DATE: March 3, 2011

RE: **OPPOSE** – House Bill 821 – *Hospitals – Medical Harm Disclosure Act*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents over 7,300 Maryland physicians and their patients, opposes House Bill 821.

House Bill 821 would require hospitals as a condition of licensure to report “medical harm events” to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, establishes an Advisory Committee, and sets up a Patient Safety Fund at the expense of hospitals. MedChi opposes this measure.

The goals of House Bill 821 are laudable in seeking to identify “medical harm events” and taking steps to prevent them from recurring. However, this same goal was what led to the adoption of the Hospital Patient Safety Program (see COMAR 10.07.06.01). The Patient Safety Program’s purpose includes: “identifying adverse events,” “encourage reporting [by hospitals] of near misses,” requiring hospitals to conduct investigations of such events, and providing a process to notify a patient or their family of such events. Indeed, this seems to be the purpose of House Bill 821 as well.

MedChi sees no reason to establish, in statute, something that already exists in regulation, and which in its approximately seven years of existence, has worked well. In a year when hospitals are facing substantial funding cuts, it seems to MedChi to be no time to

The Honorable Peter A. Hammen, Chairman
House Bill 821
Page Two

impose fees upon hospitals to establish a new program, when in fact one already exists that achieves the same purpose.

For this reason, MedChi opposes House Bill 821.

For more information call:

Joseph A. Schwartz, III
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
410-269-1618