

MedChi

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TO: The Honorable Peter A. Hammen, Chairman
Members, Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Bonnie L. Cullison

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

DATE: March 8, 2012

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 957 – *Health Occupations – Public Disclosure of Professional Credentials*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents over 7,600 Maryland physicians and their patients, supports House Bill 957.

House Bill 957 is a MedChi priority in the 2012 Session. This legislation accomplishes two important objectives, both aimed at ensuring that patients are properly informed about the health care professionals providing them with care.

First, House Bill 957 requires a health care practitioner (anyone licensed or certified under the Health Occupations Article) who works in a patient care setting, to disclose on an identification tag, the full spelling of their name and the type of license the practitioner holds. With the explosion of various health care disciplines, the number of allied health professions and the high level of education attained by some of these disciplines – all positives in the field of health care – MedChi believes the public should be fully informed about the credentials of the professionals they speak with.

Likewise, House Bill 957 requires these same disclosures of name and type of license held in any advertisement by a health care professional. If the professional knowingly misstates or falsely describes their skills, training or licensure, they could be subject to professional discipline by their respective board.

Finally, House Bill 957 applies a restriction upon physicians and their ability to represent

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to the public that they are “board certified” in a particular specialty. In order to make such a representation, the certifying specialty board must be a member of the American Board of Medical Specialties, an American Osteopathic Association certifying board, or a specialty board approved by the Board of Physicians. Just as the public should be informed of the license held by all health care professionals, it also has the right to know whether a physician claiming to be “board certified” is truly so certified.

MedChi believes this legislation is a much needed disclosure measure, designed to provide the public with essential and full information as they seek health care. Patients are entitled to know the information required by this bill, and the law should require its disclosure.

For these reasons, MedChi strongly supports House Bill 957.

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