

MedChi

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TO: The Honorable Brian A. Frosh, Chairman
Members, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
The Honorable Delores Kelley

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

DATE: February 2, 2012

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** – Senate Bill 76 – *Criminal Law –
Controlled Dangerous Substances – Research – Synthetic Cannabinoids*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents over 7,600 Maryland physicians and their patients, supports Senate Bill 76 with amendment.

Synthetic cannabinoids are rapidly becoming a significant public health challenge. They are chemically engineered substances that are similar to the active ingredients in marijuana and produce a similar effect when smoked or ingested. They have become a popular alternative to marijuana, particularly with youth and have been linked to tachycardia, seizures, hallucinations and other responses commonly found with drug abuse.

Senate Bill 76 adds to Schedule I, the Schedule for controlled dangerous substances, several chemical compounds known as synthetic cannabinoids. Designation of these chemicals as Schedule I drugs will effectively ban them in Maryland as Schedule I cannot be prescribed, manufactured, possessed, dispensed, imported, exported or sold. These substances have no safe use, present a high potential for drug abuse and should be banned from the marketplace.

MedChi would also note the research language that is included in this legislation which was not included in the bill in 2011. There may be legitimate research being conducted on these chemicals. Failure to include the proposed research language could inadvertently

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prohibit or negatively impact these research efforts. To that end, it is MedChi's understanding that the proposed research language requires additional amendment to ensure the objective of the bill does not create unintended consequences for legitimate research. MedChi urges the Committee to work with those institutions that can properly craft the language to insure the intended objectives of the legislation are achieved. With its amendment noted, MedChi urges a favorable report.

For more information call:

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