

MedChi

The Maryland State Medical Society

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TO: The Honorable Joan Carter Conway, Chairman
Members, Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee
The Honorable Thomas Mac Middleton

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

DATE: February 8, 2012

RE: **OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED** – Senate Bill 344 – *Health Occupations –
Dental Hygienists – Local Anesthesia*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents over 7,600 Maryland physicians and their patients, opposes Senate Bill 344 unless it is amended.

Senate Bill 344 would permit dental hygienists to administer local anesthesia by inferior alveolar nerve block under the supervision of a dentist. While hygienists are permitted to administer local anesthesia currently, Senate Bill 344 expands that authority to nerve blocks which pose different risks and, therefore, require different skills and training.

MedChi does not believe that dental hygienists currently possess the requisite skills and training to administer anesthesia in this manner. Indeed, the bill acknowledges as much by requiring that the Board of Dentistry impose certain additional educational requirements before a hygienist is permitted to administer anesthesia in this way. However, MedChi believes those educational requirements should require both didactic and clinical hours that focus not only upon proper administration of the block, but upon recognizing risks and complications associated with the block. Furthermore, some level of continuing education should be required.

Accordingly, MedChi opposes Senate Bill 344 unless it is amended to require the specific educational criteria outlined above.

For more information call:

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