

# 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 Catherine Pugh

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

DATE: February 15, 2012

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 564 – *Student Health and Fitness Act*

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The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents over 7,300 Maryland physicians and their patients, supports Senate Bill 564.

Senate Bill 564 requires that all students in kindergarten through grade 5 participate in a 150 minutes of physical education per week. The increasing incidence of childhood obesity and the significant social and health consequences associated with this public health epidemic is appropriately receiving increased attention from health professionals, educators, and public policy makers. A critical component of any successful strategy to combat childhood obesity includes increased physical activity. Given the amount of a child's day that is spent in school, mandatory requirements for physical education are logical, cost-effective and will produce significant benefits in the health and social well-being of students.

The benefits of physical activity are not limited to efforts to help control weight. Physical activity in children provides a wide range of significant health benefits including, but not limited to, increased muscle strength and aerobic endurance, increased

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bone mass, and prevention and reduction of high blood pressure. Furthermore, there is increased evidence that academic performance and behavior control is enhanced with increased physical activity.

MedChi applauds the sponsor for her leadership on issues regarding childhood obesity, health and physical education. Senate Bill 564 is a modest and well-justified approach to incorporating the unquestionable benefits of physical activity into the curriculum of our schools. MedChi strongly urges a favorable report.

**For more information call:**

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