

MedChi

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TO: The Honorable Thomas Mac Middleton, Chairman
Members, Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Joseph A. Schwartz, III
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J. Steven Wise

DATE: March 21, 2012

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS** – Senate Bill 954 – *Medical Records – HIPAA Consistency Act of 2012*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents over 7,600 Maryland physicians and their patients, supports Senate Bill 954 with amendments.

In its original form, Senate Bill 954 attempted to substitute the Federal HIPAA law for the present Maryland protections on the confidentiality and privacy of patient medical records. In many cases, Maryland's law is more protective of patient confidentiality than the Federal HIPAA law. The genesis of Senate Bill 954 was CareFirst's belief that Maryland's privacy laws would deny the ability to share historic patient information with doctors participating in projects such as the Patient-Centered Medical Home.

MedChi believes that many of the Maryland protections are appropriate but, at the same time, it recognizes CareFirst's concern that certain Maryland existing Maryland provisions will frustrate the coordination of patient care, particularly in projects such as the Patient-Centered Medical Home and Affordable Care Organizations (ACOs) under the Federal Affordable Care Act.

MedChi applauds CareFirst on its willingness to work with various stakeholders (MedChi, the Department of Health, and the Attorney General's Health & Education

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Advocacy Unit) to fashion a series of amendments so that Senate Bill 954 is surgically directed to accomplish the goals of coordinating patient care by the sharing of patient information.

In its amended form, MedChi supports Senate Bill 954.

For more information call:

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