

# MedChi

*The Maryland State Medical Society*

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TO: The Honorable Dereck E. Davis, Chairman  
Members, House Economic Matters Committee

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

DATE: February 12, 2013

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 227 – Maryland Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN) Program

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The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents over 7,500 Maryland physicians and their patients, supports House Bill 227.

House Bill 227 creates the Maryland EARN Program. The purpose of the program will be to create a coordinated system to advance employment skills through a collaboration of industry, government and other entities including community colleges. The notion is to identify high demand occupations and to provide training and education for the skills necessary to meet that demand.

The EARN Program will rely upon strategic industry partnerships for workforce training and grants will be available for such strategic industry partnerships (page 5, lines 18-19). One such “target” industry is health care which because of the Federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Affordable Care Act) will result in the extension of health insurance coverage to hundreds of thousands of Marylanders beginning in January of 2014. More and better trained health care workers will be necessary to accommodate the new demand for health care services.

For example, Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) are a new delivery model of health care being promoted by the Accountable Care Act. ACOs will be new types of entities where groups of doctors, hospitals and other providers will work together to provide coordinated, high quality care. Through better coordination, increased focus on primary care and preventative services, these groups will work to provide the right care at the right time with the goal of enhancing patient outcomes at a lower cost. A key to the success of these ACOs, will be identifying health professionals who will be responsible for facilitating the coordination of care and ensuring a patient’s compliance with treatment. Such care

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coordinators will be in high demand but there really is no current program to support this new type of health professional.

Currently, the federal government has approved nine ACOs in Maryland and MedChi believes that the passage of House Bill 227 could provide an opportunity for new workers to be trained through the EARN Program. Local community colleges and the EARN Program could be valuable partners of the now emerging ACOs in Maryland.

MedChi would urge a favorable report on House Bill 227.

**For more information call:**

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