MedChi

TO: The Honorable Peter A. Hammen, Chairman
        Members, House Health & Government Operations Committee
        The Honorable Barbara Robinson

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

DATE: February 21, 2013

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** – House Bill 712 – *Health Occupation
        Boards – Criminal History Records Checks – General Authority*

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The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents over 7,500 Maryland physicians and their patients, supports House Bill 712 with amendment.

House Bill 712 would enable all health occupations boards to adopt regulations allowing for a criminal history records check, both at initial licensure and upon renewal.

MedChi understands the need for regulations establishing a criminal records check procedure, but believes that a records check at license renewal every 2 years will be onerous for licensees, particularly when the courts are required to report certain convictions of physicians to the Board of Physicians. This reporting mechanism should provide the Board with information that allows it to take any necessary action following the conviction of a physician for a crime.

Currently, MedChi understands that the Board of Physicians will conduct criminal records checks on applicants as the need arises. Initial applicants must also disclose any convictions. MedChi recognizes that this information is important for patient safety. Our concern is that the legislation would allow the Board to require applicants at renewal every two years, as a matter of course, to undergo a criminal records check. To resolve this issue, MedChi will be submitting amendments to the Committee to limit the circumstances when a records check can be required at renewal.

For these reasons, MedChi supports House Bill 712 with amendments.

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