

MedChi

The Maryland State Medical Society

1211 Cathedral Street
Baltimore, MD 21201-5516
410.539.0872
Fax: 410.547.0915

1.800.492.1056

www.medchi.org

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

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

DATE: February 12, 2013

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** – Senate Bill 386 – *Department of Health and Mental Hygiene – Study of Paratransit Services for Dialysis Patients*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents over 7,500 Maryland physicians and their patients, supports Senate Bill 386 with amendment.

Senate Bill 386, as amended by the sponsor, will provide for a study of the demand for and financing of paratransit services by local jurisdictions, specifically as it relates to dialysis patients. As the demand for dialysis services continues to increase, it is critical that funding for local paratransit services keeps pace with that demand. Many dialysis patients rely upon their local paratransit services for transportation to and from dialysis centers. Without access to these transit services access to care is jeopardized.

Dialysis centers are prohibited, under federal law, from providing transportation for their patients. While many dialysis patients provide their own transportation, there are those patients who have no option but to rely on local transportation networks. Inadequate funding has led to the curtailment of local transportation services thereby creating significant barriers to access for those most in need of these services. Passage of Senate Bill 386 will ensure that the state carefully evaluate whether funding is keeping pace with demand for service. The amendments offered by the sponsor of the legislation clarify the focus of the study. MedChi urges a favorable report as amended.

For more information call:

Joseph A. Schwartz, III
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
410-244-7000