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TO: The Honorable Peter A. Hammen, Chair
Members, House Health & Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Dan Morhaim

FROM: Joseph A. Schwartz, III
Danna L. Kauffman
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DATE: February 27, 2014

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 1088 – *Health Occupations – Ophthalmologists Who Store and Administer Drugs – Exclusion From Maryland Pharmacy Act*

On behalf of MedChi, the Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi) and the Maryland Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons (MSEPS), we support House Bill 1088.

On behalf of MedChi and MSEPS, we strongly support House Bill 1088, which will provide a narrow exception to the State's current pharmacy laws to ensure that patients have access to ophthalmic drugs for emergency treatment of painful and sight-threatening ophthalmic diseases. Specifically, House Bill 1088 specifies that the Maryland Pharmacy Act does not limit the right of an ophthalmologist to store in his or her office and administer to his or her patient, without a patient specific prescription: (1) antibiotics for the emergency treatment of bacterial endophthalmitis and viral retinitis; and (2) antivascular endothelial growth factor agents for the emergency treatment of neovascular glaucoma, wet macular degeneration, and macular edema.

Currently, Maryland law does not permit ophthalmologists to keep emergency supplies of compounded drugs in their offices without a patient specific prescription. The problem is that there are emergency situations where compounded drugs need to be administered immediately to treat painful and sight-threatening ophthalmic diseases. In many cases, delayed treatment of these conditions can result in permanent vision loss or even loss of the eye itself. This can be avoided if ophthalmologists are allowed to maintain limited quantities of these compounded drugs in their office for emergency use. Without this bill, patients must wait a minimum of 2-3 days to have compounded drugs shipped to their doctor's offices and administered. We urge a favorable vote on House Bill 1088.

For more information call:

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