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TO: The Honorable Joan Carter Conway, Chair
Members, Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee
The Honorable William Ferguson

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

DATE: February 26, 2014

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** – Senate Bill 716 – *Child Care Centers –
Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Act*

On behalf of MedChi, the Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi) and the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP), we support Senate Bill 716 with amendment.

On behalf of MedChi and MDAAP, we strongly support Senate Bill 716. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 32% of Maryland children aged 2-5 are overweight or obese. Studies have shown that children who enter kindergarten obese or overweight have a higher likelihood to remain at an unhealthy weight through adolescence (New England Journal of Medicine, 2013), with overweight adolescents having a 70% chance of becoming overweight adults. Obesity can lead to many chronic health care conditions. The number of teens being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes and pre-diabetes nationally has grown from 9% in 1999 to 23% in 2008.

Preventing obesity must begin at an early age. Currently, the Maryland State Department of Education is charged with adopting rules and regulations relating to the licensing and operation of child care centers and those rules and regulations must ensure the proper care, protection, and supervision of children. Consequently, Senate Bill 716 seeks to ensure that children being cared for in licensed child care centers receive the appropriate balance of healthy eating and physical activity. In working with MSDE, we support the amendments sponsored by Senator Ferguson, which will provide the agency with flexibility in developing regulations to address policies promoting breastfeeding, requiring healthy drinks to be served, and reducing screen time. We believe that, with these amendments, Maryland will continue to make strides in reducing the very serious issue of childhood obesity in Maryland. We request a favorable vote with the sponsor amendments.

For more information call:

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