

MedChi

The Maryland State Medical Society

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TO: The Honorable Sheila Hixson, Chair
Members, House Ways & Means Committee
The Honorable Jay Walker

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

DATE: February 19, 2015

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 247 – *Elementary School Students - Daily Physical Activity*
(*Student Health and Fitness Act*)

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents over 8,000 Maryland physicians and their patients, supports House Bill 247.

House Bill 247 requires that all students in kindergarten through grade 5 participate in a specified amount of physical activity. The increasing incidence of childhood obesity, and the significant social and health consequences associated with this public health epidemic, are appropriately receiving increased attention from health professionals, educators, and public policy makers. A critical component of any successful strategy to combat childhood obesity is increased physical activity. Given the amount of a child's day that is spent in school, mandatory requirements for physical education are logical, cost-effective and produce significant benefits in the health and social well-being of students.

The benefits of physical activity are not limited to efforts to help control weight. Physical activity in children provides a wide range of significant health benefits including, but not limited to, increased muscle strength and aerobic endurance, increased bone mass, and prevention and reduction of high blood pressure. Furthermore, there is increased evidence that academic performance and behavior control is enhanced with increased physical activity.

MedChi applauds the sponsor for his continued leadership on issues regarding childhood obesity, health and physical education. House Bill 247 is a modest and well-justified approach to incorporating the unquestionable benefits of physical activity into the curriculum of our schools. MedChi strongly urges a favorable report.

For more information call:

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