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TO: The Honorable Thomas M. Middleton, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Katherine Klausmeier

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
Joseph A. Schwartz, III
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DATE: March 12, 2015

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** – Senate Bill 516 – *Public Health – Overdose Response Program*

On behalf of the Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the Maryland Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians (MDACEP) and the Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers (MACHC), we support Senate Bill 516, with amendment.

Senate Bill 516 authorizes physicians and advanced practice nurses to prescribe, and pharmacists to dispense, a standing order for naloxone to a person who is certified under the program administered by Department of Mental Health and Hygiene (DHMH) which trains and certifies individuals to administer Naloxone to a person who is reasonably believed to be experiencing a drug overdose. In 2013, in response to Maryland's growing incidence of drug overdose, legislation was enacted that created a program under the auspices of DHMH that enabled individuals, other than licensed health care practitioners, to be trained and certified in the administration of Naloxone. Participants certified under the program are regularly in the presence of individuals with substance abuse disorders or behaviors that place them at risk for overdose. The timely administration of Naloxone to a person who is reasonably believed to be experiencing a drug overdose can save their life. The program has proven to be an effective tool in combating Maryland's growing incidence of drug overdose.

The ability to prescribe and dispense standing orders of Naloxone to certified individuals and organizations will enhance the program's effectiveness by ensuring that certified individuals have sufficient and timely access to Naloxone and that does not necessitate repeated visits to a prescriber. The bill, however, does require a technical amendment regarding who is an authorized prescriber. The bill references advanced practice nurses, however, not all advanced practice nurses have prescriptive authority. Therefore, Senate Bill 516 should be amended to reference "advanced practice nurses with prescriptive authority" to conform to the appropriate scope of practice limitations. With the amendment noted, the above named organizations urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 516.

For more information call:

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