

MedChi

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TO: The Honorable Peter A. Hammen, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Kirill Reznik

FROM: J. Steven Wise
Joseph A. Schwartz, III
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DATE: February 19, 2015

RE: **OPPOSE** – House Bill 451 – *Task Force to Study Regulation of Teletherapy*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents more than 8,000 Maryland physicians and their patients, opposes House Bill 451.

House Bill 451 establishes a Task Force to study certain matters related to the provision of mental health therapy services using telecommunication technologies. MedChi thoroughly agrees with the sponsor that the provision of mental health therapy through such channels poses many risks to patients, and these risks and a means to limit them should be examined.

The sole basis of our opposition lies in whether there is a need to establish an entirely new task force for purposes of this study. We would suggest that the Telemedicine Task Force, established some time ago to study issues related to the provision of medical care through telecommunication technology, would in our view be an existing body that could undertake this task and perhaps do so in a more expeditious fashion. It is our understanding that while the Telemedicine Task Force has largely wrapped up the “study” portion of its work, that it is still an operating entity. At a minimum, some of the good work already conducted by the Telemedicine Task Force on certain aspects of what is proposed in HB 451 would inform the discussion.

Med Chi appreciates the sponsor’s efforts to address these issues. We simply suggest that another entity may be an existing, appropriate and more efficient way to study them.

For more information call:

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