

MedChi

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

FROM: Danna L. Kauffman
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise

DATE: February 25, 2016

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 1318 – *Health Benefit Plans – Network Access Standards and Provider Network Directories*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents more than 7,600 Maryland physicians and their patients, supports the efforts of House Bill 1318 to ensure accurate provider directories and address the need for an increase in the adequacy of provider networks.

Because consumers will most likely obtain medical care from providers who have contracted with a network, a network that does not have an adequate number of providers in each specialty and within the consumer's geographic region deprives consumers of the benefit of health care coverage. Consequently, consumers may reduce utilization of preventative services and/or fail to obtain necessary medical care, which can lead to increased emergency room and hospital utilization. On a similar note, consumers need to be able to properly assess the appropriateness of a provider network prior to selecting a particular plan and must also be able to continue to rely on the information when medical care needs change.

MedChi cautions that in specifying the information to be included in the provider directory, the directory should only include essential information to assist a consumer in choosing a network and/or provider. Information regarding provider tiers and selection criteria, while important, should not be part of the directory itself. Additionally, in reviewing the items that should be taken into consideration in determining network adequacy, we believe that this should be developed by the Maryland Insurance Administration under regulations and not prescriptive in statute.

MedChi urges a favorable report.

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