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TO: The Honorable Peter A. Hammen, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Thomas M. Middleton

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
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DATE: March 22, 2016

RE: **SUPPORT** - Senate Bill 91 – *Public Health – State-Identified HIV Priorities*

On behalf of the Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers (MACHC) and the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP), we support Senate Bill 91.

Due to successful intervention over the years, the incidence of HIV and AIDS has declined in Maryland. In many respects, HIV and AIDS are no longer perceived by the public as a significant public health threat or a life-threatening condition. To many, they are now considered chronic conditions that are managed through the use of pharmaceuticals, medical, and support services. However, this perception has begun to result a marked slowing of the rate of decline in disease incidence. Maryland's rate of new HIV cases is one of the highest in the nation with a significant proportion of that incidence involving adolescents.

Passage of Senate Bill 91 will provide the State with flexibility in the use of pharmaceutical rebates that are received by the Maryland AIDS Drug Assistance Program (MADAP). Currently, because these rebates are generated from federal and special funds, they can only be used for MADAP, MADAP-Plus, and related core defined medical services. The rebates cannot be utilized for HIV prevention, surveillance, and care services. The return on investment from a small general expenditure of general funds proposed by DHMH will result in rebate revenue that can be used more flexibly to target the pressing need for prevention, surveillance and related services.

Senate Bill 91 will expand the State's ability to support HIV prevention, surveillance and care services for high-risk HIV individuals such as pre-exposure prophylaxis medication and case management. There is strong evidence to suggest that, absent a concerted effort to reinvigorate public awareness, prevention and support services, there could be an increase in the incidence of HIV and AIDS with a significant portion of that increase occurring in young adults and adolescents who do not have the historical awareness of risks associated with HIV and AIDS. The Department is to be applauded for its creative approach to address a growing public health challenge. A favorable report is requested.

For more information call:

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